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T H E
Penitential Discipline
O F T H E
Primitive Church,
F O R T H E
First 400 Years after Christ :
Together with
Its Declension from the fifth Century,
downwards to its Present State,
Impartially Represented.

By a Presbyter of the Church of ENGLAND.

O Mirabilem sacrosanctæ Antiquitatis pietatem & Religio-
nem ! Quotus enim quisque in hoc rerum senio & propè
occasu, plurimis & gravissimis noxis vel unam lachry-
mulam arcandæ secum expendit ! At unius delicti consci-
entiam sanctissimâ illâ in Antiquitate, solidum trienni-
um, etiam verò quadriennium, inspectante Ecclesiâ, propa-
lamque lugebant, non elugebant quippe, sed hanc sibi
viam ad luctum atque ad Pœnitentiam muniebant. O
veteris Disciplinæ sanctitatem mirabilem, quæ culpas sic
amputabat, ut reliquum Corpus integrum & ab omni labe
castum tueretur ! *Albaspin. de veterib. Ecclesiæ ritib. Lib.*
2. Observat. 22.

L O N D O N,

Printed for W. TAYLOR at the Ship in Pater-
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St. Paul's Church-Yard. MDCCXIV,



T H E

PREFACE.



F the Title-Page which is prefix'd to the following Papers, will not prevail with the Reader to look further into them, I have no Expectation of Success from any other Perswasives which I can offer to him.

Discipline is a Thing so little known to us, and that of the Primitive Church

A 2

hath

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bath hitherto lain involved in such a Number of voluminous Writers, that the drawing it thence into, a clear and open Light, would, I conceived, be a Thing of much Use and Benefit : So that if I have perform'd this Part well and faithfully, I am not without Hope, that I have done a good Work. Whether I have so perform'd, or not, the Reader must judge for himself upon Tryal made of it.

As to my personal Unfitnesses for such a Service, it will be to no Purpose to recount them, except my Name were herewith publish'd; and even then it would be needless to recount them, because they would be known without it.

But since the Booksellers inform me, that a Book will not pass without a Preface, and that the courteous Reader expects to be civilly saluted at his Entrance, it may not be amiss to prepare him for what shall follow, by acquainting him with what hath preceded,
by

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by what Steps I was led into a Design of this Nature, and with what Helps I have prosecuted it.

I had long consider'd, and lamented, the Difference between the ancient and present State of the penitential Discipline; and tho' I never thought the Purity and Perfection of this Discipline essential to the Being of a Church, yet I could not but judge it highly conducive and expedient to her Well-being. I consider'd likewise, that very few were at all apprehensive of this Matter; and if it were suffer'd to continue thus unknown and unthought of, that the Revival of it, to any Degree, would be utterly impossible. As yet, however, I was far enough from a Thought of engaging my self in the Subject, 'till communicating some of my Doubts upon it, to a very Reverend and Learned Friend, (whom to name as a Party to this Work, were alone sufficient to commend it to the Learned World) he was pleas'd to advise, that I should set about
it;

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it ; and after a little Struggle with my self, and with him upon it, I was finally perswaded to engage in it.

Little did I, at that Time, apprehend what a Burden would hence be brought upon me, what a Tract of Time I was to take a View of, what a Multitude of various Occurrences I was to pass through, and what a Number of Books was necessarily to be consulted. I had then no Materials by me, more peculiarly fitted for this, than for any other Work, which should oblige me to trace the Antiquities of the primitive Church ; nothing but general Hints of this, in common with other Subjects, which I had at different Times extracted from ancient Authors.

But here I had some Relief from the kind Assistance of my very Learned Friend, and should have had more, if his broken Health would have permitted him to have kept me Company in these Researches.

The

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The Distress I was under, from the Want of divers Books which were necessary to be perus'd upon this Occasion, was with great Readiness and Humanity made easy to me, by friendly Communications from a Reverend and Learned Librarian.

This is a Case which I cannot but lament in many of my Brethren, who (I am sure) must hence be disabled from performing many good Services, which they would otherwise be both able and willing to go thro', if this Want of Books, and of Access to good Libraries, did not prevent them. If the Design for Parochial Libraries were effectually prosecuted, this Grievance might, to a good Degree, be redress'd; but 'till the Clergy have a better Provision than what they have, it will remain a Grievance. And since their Studies are design'd for the publick Service, I cannot apprehend it an immodest Expectation, if they entertain

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*tain some Hope, that the publick Purse
will one Day lend them sufficient Aid.*

But to return.

*When, by the Helps I have related, I
had form'd a rough Draught of the en-
suing Papers, it was communicated to
some of the ablest Judges, whose polite
Learning, and great Knowledge of An-
tiquity, join'd with exemplary Morals
and substantial Piety, entitle them to
the Esteem and Admiration of all who
know, or have heard of them; and I
can assure my Reader, that there are
very few of this Nation, who are not
in the latter Number; nor I believe a-
ny in the former, who do not esteem
such Acquaintances amongst the choicest
Blessings of their Lives.*

*They were pleas'd, upon a careful
Perusal, to approve the Undertaking,
and to encourage it; I suppose, upon
the common Presumption, that a puny
Counsel might serve to open the Cause,
and*

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and to make the Motion, tho' much higher Degrees of Eloquence and Learning would be requir'd to prosecute and finish it. If this were their Presumption, I most heartily concur with it, and do hereby beseech and exhort some of those many, who are qualify'd so much better than my self for sustaining and adorning this Province, that they would come and help me.

The Work hath already receiv'd the Corrections of Judges, as accurate and discerning as any Friends can be ; and it comes out accordingly with much greater Advantage, as well as with the fewer Faults, for having been so corrected.

Yet, because that natural Candor, which is ever inseparable from great and good Minds, together with some personal Indulgence towards a well-meaning Author, may possibly have render'd them too favourable in their Structures; I do further invite and encourage all who shall not think fit to animadvert

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madvert upon me in a more publick Manner, to communicate their Objections or Doubts in private, which the Publishers are instructed how they may convey to me. I promise to give them a thankful Reception, and a fair Examination, with all the Secrecy which shall be desir'd from me.

I have many Reasons for concealing my Name, with which it will not be necessary to trouble my Reader ; tho' none, I will confess to him, of more Weight with me, than this ; Lest my Name prefix'd to it, should prove, in some Way or other, a Disadvantage to my Performance. I have written nothing in it, which I am asham'd or afraid of owning ; but perhaps by my not owning it, it may have the fewer Enemies : And whatever becomes of the Author's Person, I will acknowledge so much of an Author's Fondness for his own Work, as to confess, that I should be glad to see it well receiv'd, because then the Design of it will be best promoted.

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I know not whether it will be fit to apologize for the Length and Number of the Quotations; since in a Work of this Nature, I should think an Author very presumptuous, who should expect to be credited upon the single Authority of an Ipse Dixit. If I had not therefore produc'd my Vouchers, I should have believ'd every Reader would have call'd for them; and if I had produc'd them only in a Translation, I should have apprehended, that the learned Reader would have demanded the Original, and would have complain'd of me for sending him to examine the Propriety of my Translations, amongst so many and various, and some of them not common Authors.

The Care I have us'd both in the one, and in the other, will, I hope, secure me from the Censure of my learned Readers, and from the Imputation of misleading my unlearned ones, by any Pas-

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sage of Moment, which is either cited or translated in the following Papers.

I have no where taken any Thing upon Trust from modern Authorities; nor am I conscious to my self, that I have made any other Use of our modern Writers, than what is particularly acknowledged in the Body of the ensuing Treatise.

Only it may be fit to inform the Reader, that at my Entrance upon this Work, I read over what our most learned Arch-bishop Usher hath written upon the Subject, in his Answer to the Jesuit's Challenge; together with a Tract of Penitential Confession, written about 70 Years ago by an anonymous Author, which was put into my Hands by my very learned Friend, whom I have already mention'd in the Beginning of this Preface.

*I have not cited either of these Authors in the Body of my Work, because
indeed*

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indeed I do not remember any particular Use which I made either of the one or the other ; tho' as each of them might contribute to enlarge and perfect my Ideas of this whole Subject, I have judg'd it unfit to defraud them of their due Acknowledgments.

I likewise went through that great Magazine of Learning, which Morinus hath collected upon this Occasion ; from whose Sentiments, however, I have taken the Liberty to depart, whenever I saw, or thought I saw, Reason. For as no Regards should be so sacred, as those of Truth ; so having extracted most of my Materials from the Fountain, I knew not why I should be restrain'd from employing my own Judgment in the Use I made of them. If at any Time I have been specially oblig'd to this, or any other Author, I have all along cited him by Name, and referr'd to the Place, that the Reader, if he pleases, may the more readily consult him.

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I have one Thing further to advertise, which perhaps may be thought to stand in need of some Apology, viz. That not having by me those huge and numerous Volumes of the Latin Councils, which have been publish'd, severally, by Labbee and Binius, I have frequently resorted to Mr. Howel's Synopsis : But then wherever I found or suspected him to be faulty, I have all along had Recourse to Labbee or Binius for further Certainty. So that I hope no material Error will hence be charg'd upon me.

*After all, I am very far from the Vanity of expecting, that the Discipline of our Church should be regulated according to my Scheme, as propounded in the fourth Chapter. I wish I could have found Words more expressive of my entire Submission to that venerable Body, with which all Designs and Attempts of this Nature ought to be entrusted. However, as it is not their Part to perswade or convince, but to appoint
and*

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and order, there can be no Harm in feeling before-hand how People are affected, in endeavouring to apprize them of what hath so long been wanting, nor in trying what Reception shall be given to such an Undertaking. Upon me be the Blame, if any Thing in it be amiss or improper; and let those be acquitted, who have had no Hand in it.

Upon the Whole;

*I have represented, as faithfully as I could, the Practice of the primitive Church in her Penitential Discipline. And in the Offers I have made for a Return to, some Part, at least, of her Usages and Customs, I have propounded them with all the Tendernefs wherewith I could possibly guard them. And I do further here profess, that I shall esteem my self amply recompenc'd for all the Pains I have bestow'd upon the ensuing Papers, if our two Houses of Convocation will be pleas'd to take
them*

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them into their Protection, and enter in such Ways as shall seem best to their own great Wisdom, upon any Regulations of our present Discipline.



E R R A T A.

IN Preface, pag. iv. last Word, for *Searches*, read *Re-searches*.

Pag. 14. last Line but two, for *Excommunication*, read *Excommunication*. Pag. 33. Note y. f. *Agnationis*, r. *Agnitionis*. Pag. 46. last Line, f. *this*, r. *his*. Pag. 67. l. 19. f. *Formalities*, r. *Formularies*. Pag. 70. l. 5. f. *Occasion*, r. *Occasions*. Pag. 88. l. 8. f. *People*, r. *People's*. Pag. 89. last Line but one, f. *ths*, r. *the*. Pag. 94. Note m. f. 11, 12. r. § 12. Pag. 109. l. 19. f. *the*, r. *one*. In Title of Pag. 113. f. § 1. r. § 3. Pag. 119. l. 11. f. *have*, r. *hath*. Pag. 130. Note b. f. *rigoris*, r. *vigoris*. Pag. 173. l. 8. f. *Centuries*, r. *Century*. Pag. 185. Note c. dele *ibid.* and *ibid.* Pag. 202. l. 5. f. *Jepinator*, r. *Jejunator*. Pag. 230. l. 15. f. *Orders*, r. *Order*. Pag. 251. Note k. f. *publicè*, r. *publicâ*.

In the APPENDIX.

PAG. 11. line 10. for *Deputrue*, read *Departure*. Pag. 12. last Line but two, f. *Resignation*, r. *Segregation*. Pag. 15. Note k. f. *thus*, r. *this*. Pag. 49. l. 19. f. *was*, r. *were*.

Introduction.



T H E

Introduction.



WHAT the *Greeks* call *μετάνοια*, and the *Latins* *Penitentia*, that we express by the Word *Penitence* or *Repentance*.

Now, as several Things are imply'd in this, such as a *Change* of *Mind*, a *Compunction* of *Heart*, with all the *Discipline* preparatory or subsequent thereunto; in the Use of the Word, Regard is differently had, sometimes to one, sometimes to another Part of the Duty.

The *Greeks* (as their Expression imports) seem chiefly to have had in View that *After-Thought*, that *Change* of Mind, of Purpose, and Inclination, which is always a considerable Branch of this great Duty.

On the other Hand, the (*a*) *Latins* seem most to have fix'd upon that *Compunction* of Spirit; that *Grief* of Heart, wherewith a true *Penitent* always afflicts his Soul. We have follow'd the

B

latter,

(*a*) *Penitentia* appellata, quasi *Punitentia* eo quod ipse Homo in se punitur penitendo quod male admisit. *Isidor. Hispalens. Originum, Lib. 6. c. 19.*

latter, and have borrow'd our Expression from them.

But how differently soever we may derive the *Word*, whither from its Causes, its Effects, or its Concomitants, we are well enough agreed in the *Thing*, and have no Dispute about the Meaning of *Penitence* or *Repentance*.

So much of this Duty as passes between God and our own Souls, or as our Neighbour may be concern'd in, by Way of Restitution to him, is a large *common Place* in Divinity, which hath been copiously handled in *practical Discourses*.

But the *external Discipline* of *Repentance*, that which the Church of Christ for so many Ages apply'd *medicinally* to the *Distempers* of her *Body*: *This* hath lain a great while under gross Neglects,

(*b*) Once in a Year we solemnly profess our Wishes to have it *restor'd*: But if something farther be not contributed to its Restoration, than our *Annual Wishes*, it will lie where it does, *disregarded* by *All*, and utterly *unknown* to the thoughtless *Many*.

Our Church is justly esteem'd the Bulwark and Glory of the Reformation; nor will it be any Forfeiture of her Character, if it be acknowledged, that she is not perfect. *Perfection* is a Title she leaves to be usurp'd by those, which, of all Communities, (calling themselves Christian) have the least Pretence to it: And it is pretty remarkable, that this Claim is made by the Church of *Rome* as a Body, and by the Quakers, each Man for himself. Both would be *perfect*, and both infallible, whilst by these, and divers other arrogant Pretences, they de-
stroy

(*b*) See our Office of Commination, which begins with a Recognition of the primitive Discipline.

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they their own Claim, and prove themselves to be *least*, what they would *most seem* to be. Our Church makes no such haughty Pretension, but owns her Defect in the Office, just cited, and professes to wish that it may be supply'd.

Whither the Times will bear a Restitution of the *ancient Discipline*, or any Approaches towards it, is not Matter of *private Enquiry*, but of *publick Cognizance*; and, as such, is humbly submitted to its proper Judges.

But with all due Deference to the higher Powers, the Author sees no Reason which should restrain him from endeavouring to awaken a Sense of what we have lost in the Minds of his Readers, to compare *past* Things with *present*, and to shew wherein the Difference (which is confess'd) between them does consist.

If we are sincere in our Professions of wishing that *Godly Discipline restor'd*, whose Loss and Disuse we lament, the Concurrence of *many* will go some Way towards it. *Authority* may easily make it practicable to those who desire it, (and some such 'tis hop'd may be found even in this licentious Generation;) and for those who despise it, (who I'm perswaded will be found either amongst the Profane or the Ignorant) they must go on to despise, 'till God in his Mercy shall touch their Hearts, or enlighten their Understandings; but let them, mean while, beware of *fighting against God*.

It is the Scorners's Property to *laugh*, when he should *mourn*; and I expect he should exert himself, as, usually, upon this Occasion. Men who are accusom'd to *glory in their Shame*, and to mock at the Distinctions between Good and Evil, have no Address intended to them in this Discourse.

The serious Christian (wherever found) is desir'd to peruse these Papers with that impartial Candor, which the Author hopes he writes 'em with.

That stale and putrid Imputation of Popery, is what he despises, from a Consciousness, that he does not deserve it; and from a full Perswasion, that no one will attempt to fix it upon him, who is at all acquainted either with *him*, or with his *Subject*.

He writes for a *Restoration* of that *Discipline* to its *ancient Purity*, which the *Novelties* of *Pope-ry* have *corrupted*, and convey'd to us, not so fully clear'd (as we could wish it were) from the Stains it hath thence contracted.

We answer with some Difficulty, when a Want of Discipline is objected to us. If then it be a Fault, why should it not be amended? If it be confess'd, why should it not be remedy'd?

The Age (it will be said) is loose, and will not *bear* it; tho' that be indeed a Reason which most *requires* it. Perhaps the *Toak* of Christ's Religion, easy, as it is, in its own Nature, may, yet, prove too *galling* and heavy for such *tender* Necks. But Men who are sincere in their *Sorrow* for Sin, will contentedly take to themselves the *Shame* of it; as knowing it will be better to *expose themselves* in the Presence of a *few* gathered together in the Name of God, and under a Sense of his All-seeing Wisdom and Almighty Power, than to *be expos'd against their Wills*, at the *general* Assembly of the Resurrection. To such as are *otherwise-minded*, no Force is propounded; and therefore no Cause of Complaint is offer'd them.

But why then may not those who desire a Conformity to *primitive Manners*, and to *Apostolick*

The INTRODUCTION. 5

lick Usages, be indulg'd in such a reasonable Demand? Why should they not be assisted in their pious Purpose, and have it at least in their Power to follow the *ancient Church* in the *Manner* of their Repentance?

If these Papers shall fall into the Hands of those in Authority, the Author most humbly intreats their favourable Perusal, and Protection of them, that what he writes with an honest Design, may, with their Assistance, be made effectual.

A *Penitential Office* hath been reckon'd among the Things which are wanting to us, that if any are willing to rank themselves in the Class of *publick Penitents*, (as in the primitive Church many did of their own Accord) they may thence be directed in their religious Intentions, and led, as it were by the Hand, to the *Ministry* of *Reconciliation*.

Or if any shall be found deserving of a *judicial Censure*, by *publick enormous Crimes*, and shall submit to Discipline, and in a becoming Manner desire a Re-admission; that the Way to this may be chalk'd out for them, and *Remission of Sins* be obtain'd by the Church.

This therefore is humbly propounded to the two Houses of Convocation, that they would begin to answer the great Hopes which have been conceiv'd of their *perfecting* what is *wanting* to us.

The Juncture looks favourable, the Eyes of the World are upon them, and somewhat is expected proportionable to their own great *Abilities*, and to the Encouragement they have from a *gracious Queen* to exert them.

Private Men may write and wish; but *they* only can (as 'tis fit *they* only *should*) execute.

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This therefore the Author submits to their great Wisdom, propounding only to enquire into these four Things, each of which will be the Subject of a distinct Chapter.

1. The Foundation whereupon the Church builds her Claim to the Power which will be here asserted.
2. The Use she made of it, and the Manner wherein she exerted it, for the first 400 Years.
3. The Departure of the *Western* Churches from the primitive Model.
4. Whether any Revival of this might be practicable; or how far it might be so, if it should seem good to Authority to make the Tryal.

Under some of these Heads most of what is design'd to be written upon this Subject, will easily be comprehended; only it will be fit to let the Reader know, at his Entrance upon these Enquiries, that the Discipline here all along intended to be spoke to, is a Branch of that Power, which is commonly call'd the *Power of the Keys*, or the *Actual Exercise* of that *Authority* which was granted by Christ to his Apostles, (c) of *Binding* and *Loosing*, of (d) *Remitting* and *Retaining* Sins.

This, if it shall appear to have been really granted by Christ to his Apostles, and by them transmitted to the Church for all succeeding Generations, is a Depositum and Trust of such great Importance, that I know not how we shall be able to excuse our Departure from it.

(c) To St. Peter in St. Mat. 16 and 19. To the rest in St. Mat. 18. 18.

(d) Again, under another Title, St. John 20. 23.



T H E
Penitential Discipline
O F T H E
Primitive Church.

C H A P. I.

*The Foundation whereupon the Church
builds her Claim to the Power here
asserted.*



THIS *Foundation* is three-fold. For (1.) somewhat there is of this Kind founded in common Reason. (2.) She hath an exprefs Charter to bear her out in it. And (3.) her Construction of the Sense wherein she understands the Words of that Charter, is deriv'd to her from general and current Practice, as well before, as after the Delivery of these Powers to her by Christ, her Founder.

S E C T. I.

Somewhat there is of this Kind, which is founded in common Reason, that the Church,

as a Society, should have the Powers belonging to her, which are necessary to her Support and Preservation.

Now, there can be no Society without Government; and there can be no Government, without a Power to encourage the Orderly and Obedient, and to discountenance Gain-sayers, and such as *(e) walk disorderly*.

But then, as our Saviour's *(f) Kingdom was not of this World*, it was none of his Purpose to interfere with the Rulers of it, nor to invest the Governors of his Church with any other Powers than what should be purely spiritual.

Some outward and visible Form of Government, was however necessary to the Church, for her external Polity; and as there was an outward Admission to the Privileges of Church-Membership, so it was expedient to the Honour of the Spouse of Christ, and from the Design of her Founder requisite, that she should retain no *scandalous Followers* in Communion with her; and therefore, as they were *admitted* into Fellowship with her by one *solemn Ceremony*, (*viz.* that of Baptism) it was very proper that they should be cut off from her by another, (*viz.* that of judicial Censure.) Again, that upon their humble Desire of Reconciliation, they should be *restor'd* by a third, (*viz.* that of Absolution.) And finally, that the Intercourse and Commerce between her *faithful* Members, should be maintain'd by her *great Sacrifice of Praise* in the Holy Eucharist.

Since the Church of Christ is really a Society, and yet hath none of that outward coercive Power, wherewith the Civil Magistrate enforces his

(e) 2 *Thessal.* 3. 6, 7, 11.

(f) *John* 18. 36.

his Laws, it was fit she should have something in Lieu of it, whereby her Members might either be kept to rule, or else be disown'd by her, and excluded from all further Correspondence or Communion with her.

We can never frame to our selves the Notion of a Society, which hath not some Bands and Ties to cement it; so that if the Church hath no other than what affect the Conscience, it is fit at least that these should be left to her. And these are what the *Civil Power* can never have Reason to be jealous of; since a Man may, to all Intents and Purposes, discharge his several Duties to the *State*, who yet is *cut off* from all Intercourse with the *Church*.

The Powers belonging to each, their Manner of Government, and their Ways of operating upon the Hopes and Fears of their respective Members, are so totally different from each other, that they can never clash, whilst each confines it self to its proper Province.

And indeed all the Inconveniencies which have been attempted to be fasten'd upon this Claim of the Church, to an *independent Power*, are founded upon remote *Possibilities* of I know not what *Abuses*, which would alike affect *any* Claim of Power whatsoever.

Reason therefore alone will carry us so far in this Enquiry, that the Church, as a Society, instituted by Christ, should have the *Powers* necessary to her Support and Government; that she should have somewhat wherewith to keep her Members within the *Rules* and *Orders* of her *Founder*. For it were absurd to suppose of so wise a *Founder*, that he should have left her in such a naked and destitute Condition, as to have no Rules of Government, no Bands of Union
between

between her Members ; no *common Ligaments* wherewith to keep the *Body compact*, and to preserve it in Health and Vigor.

(g) *St. Cyprian* gives Discipline its just Encomium, when he ascribes to it the *Preservation of our Faith and Hope* ; *our Guidance to Heaven* ; *the Increase of all good Dispositions in us* ; *the Support of all Virtue* ; *our abiding in God and Christ*, and *our partaking at last of their blessed Promises*. He might well therefore subjoin, as he did, that *to adhere to it, was beneficial* ; and *to despise or neglect it, fatal*.

Reason will easily subscribe to his Judgment of this Matter ; and I wish there were no Occasion to observe, that Experience hath confirm'd it to us, by our Want of Discipline, and of these Advantages together.

But now, tho' *Reason* may give us some general Hints, that *Discipline* and *Government* are necessary to the Church, as she is a Society, yet what this *Government* should be, or wherein this *Discipline* should consist, could not have been thus determin'd ; so that either its Governors must have been left entirely to a discretionary Power, which perhaps its Members (as a voluntary Society) might not have acquiesc'd in ; or else,

2. Recourse must be had to the *original Deed* and Charter which incorporated them ; and thence we must endeavour to trace the Lines and Foot-steps of the Powers which therein are specify'd.

S E C T.

(g) *Disciplina Custos Spei, retinaculum fidei, Dux itineris salutaris, fomes ac Nutrimentum bonæ Indolis, Magistra virtutis, facit in Christo manere semper ac jugiter Deo vivere, & ad promissa Cœlestia, & Divina præmia pervenire. Hanc & sectari salubre est, & averfari ac negligere lethale. Cypr. de Disciplin. & Habit. Virgin.*

S E C T. II.

Now, that the Church had some Powers of this Kind to take Cognizance of her Members Offences, we may learn from our Saviour's Direction in the Case of a Brother trespassing against another. (b) " 1st, There was to be a private Admonition; if that would not do, it was to be repeated in the Presence of one or two Witnesses: If this Method prov'd unsuccessful, the Church he belong'd to, was to be interested in the Matter; he was to be solemnly conven'd and rebuk'd in Publick: But if nothing of all this would be available, then, as the last Remedy, he was to be expell'd from it; to be as an Heathen Man and a Publican. And whatsoever should thus be done upon Earth, in Virtue of our Saviour's Commission, (for it was not to the *mix'd Multitude*, but to his own immediate Disciples, that our Lord upon (i) this Occasion spoke) had a Promise from him of being ratify'd in Heaven. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.* The Authority he had before given to (k) St. Peter upon a particular Occasion, he here confirm'd to his other Disciples.

The *Jews* (we shall see) were enough acquainted with the Terms of *Binding* and *Loosing*, of being to them as an *Heathen Man* and a *Publican*; to understand the full Import of them, without farther Explication. So that we are not to wonder,

(b) St. Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17, 18.

(i) See the 1st Verse of the 18th Chapter in St. Matthew.

(k) St. Mat. 16. 19.

der, if this Authority was couch'd in Expressions, which to us, at this Distance, may seem loose and general, intricate and involv'd; because at the Time when they were deliver'd, they had a clear and well-known Reference to the current Practice of Excommunication, which our Lord apparently hence intended to adopt into his Church.

(1) *Origen* so interprets this Passage, or tells us at least, that the Bishops of his Time claim'd hence their Powers. *The Bishops* (says he) *make the same Application of that Saying, (viz. of Binding and Loosing) which St. Peter did, and have receiv'd the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven from our Saviour, and teach us, that whatsoever they bind here, i. e. condemn, is bound likewise in Heaven; and whatsoever they loose here, is also loosed in Heaven.*

In (m) *St. John* we have a more emphatical and solemn Renewal of these Powers to the Apostles after our blessed Lord's Resurrection, when he seem'd to be giving his last Orders. *Then said Jesus unto them, Peace be unto you: As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever Sins ye retain, they are retained.*

(n) The Reverend and Learned Dr. *Hammond* hath well observ'd upon this, that the Word

negotium

(1) *II qui Episcoporum locum sibi vindicant, utuntur eo dicto sicut Petrus, & claves Regni Cœlorum a servatore acceperunt; docentq; ea quæ ab illis ligata fuerint, hoc est, condemnata, eadem & in Cœlis ligata; rursus ea, quæ soluta fuerint ab ipsis, eadem & in Cœlis esse soluta. Origen. Latin. Basil. Edit. In Part I. Super Matthe. Tract. I.*

(m) *John* 20. 21, 22, 23.

(n) See Dr. *Hammond* upon the Place.

κορτεω, which we render *retain*, hath the same Signification with δεω (*bind*,) only the former is somewhat more emphatical, and signifies indeed to *keep bound*. The Word ἀφῆτε (*remit*) refers to Sin, as a *Debt*; whereas the Word λύω (*loose*) refers to it as a *Bond* or *Chain*. But that λύω (*loose*) has Reference to Sin, as well as ἀφίημι (*remit*,) and that Sins are said to be *loosed*, in the same Sense wherein they are said to be *remitted*; this, is evident from what the above-mention'd Author hath observ'd out of a Passage in the LXX concerning *Job* and his Friends; whose Sin (say those Interpreters) the Lord *loosed* or *remitted* at the Mediation of *Job*. We translate it, (o) *The Lord accepted the Person of Job*: But the Words in the LXX run thus, (p) *The Lord loosed their Sin thro' Job*, i. e. thro' his Means, or at his Intercession.

Thus much I have thought fit to suggest, that it might appear, the Passages in *St. Matthew* and *St. John*, have much the same Signification; that *Binding* and *Loosing*, are equivalent Terms to *Retaining* and *Remitting*.

(q) *Morinus* hath exhibited some of the *Jewish* Formularies, wherein they absolv'd from Excommunication; and there the very Words of *Loosing* and *Remitting*, are apply'd to the Purpose we are now contending for; nay, even *Mr. (r) Selden*,

(o) *Job* 42. 9.

(p) ὁ κύριος ἔλυσε τὴν ἁμαρτίαν αὐτῶν διὰ Ἰωβ.

(q) Talis tenetur Excommunicatione Schammata, Domus Judicii, & suscepit Judicium Legis, & Judicium Rabbanim; nunc solvat illum, & parcat ei, qui dixit Moyse, pepercit secundum verbum tuum, ipse solvet eum, & parcat ei. *Morin. de Administrat. Penitent. Lib. 4. Cap. 23. Al. ibid.* Dimissum est tibi, parcatum est tibi.

(r) Flatus cornu ligat, & flatus cornu solvit. *Selden de Synedr. veter. Ebraeor. Lib. 1. Cap. 7.*

den, tho' a profess'd Enemy to our present Construction of the Powers contain'd in *Binding* and *Loosing*, yet hath prov'd it unawares to have a just Foundation in the *Rabbinical* Learning, himself interpreting that of *Rabbi Samuel*, (*The Sound of the Trumpet binds, and the Sound of the Trumpet looses*) concerning Excommunication and Absolution; the Sound of the Trumpet being, it seems, an usual Ceremony attending upon that Discipline.

If therefore a certain foreign (s) Author had not been very much resolv'd to have oppos'd Dr. *Hammond* at all Adventures, at the Hazard of the Text, and of his own Credit together, he would never have fetch'd his Interpretation of *Binding* and *Loosing*, so far as from a Power to *infect and to cure Diseases*, which was only an accidental and temporary Consequence attendant upon the Power of *Binding* and *Loosing*. *Satan* indeed is said in *St. Luke* to have (t) bound the Woman who had a Spirit of Infirmary upon her; and she is reported (when cur'd) to have been loosed from her Bond, loosed from her Infirmary. But would our Author hence argue, that the Power of the Apostles and of *Satan* in *Binding*, were perfectly the same, because the Expressions of it are so? We will allow him (if he pleases) a Part of what he contends for, viz. that a Power of *inflicting Diseases* was granted to the Apostles, as well as the Power of mere *Excommunication*; but yet the Church (we insist) might, and did derive the one from the Apostles, altho' the other

(s) Mr. Le Clerc's Supplement to Dr. Hammond. See him on the two Passages cited from *St. John* and *St. Matthew*, pag. 5 and 6.

(t) *Luke* 13. 11, 12, 16. ἔδνησεν· ἀπολλέυσαι τὴν ἀνιάσασα· ἀντιτίθειν αὐτὴν τῷ δέσμῳ.

ether did not descend to her as a standing Gift; nor was there any Reason why it should, when there was no farther Occasion for the Continuance of Miracles.

Our Saviour sent indeed his Apostles, as he himself was sent by his Father; and yet not in all Points as himself was sent; for to him (*u*) *the Spirit was given without Measure*; whereas they had only an occasional and stinted Portion of it. In like Manner, they sent others as themselves were sent; and yet not in all Respects with the same Privileges and Powers where-with they were themselves invested; but with all, which were expedient for *planting* and *watering*, and *governing* the Church of Christ.

Mr. Le Clerc hath liv'd long after Dr. Hammond, and hath had the Opportunity of espying some Flaws in the Notes and Paraphrase of that great good Man; yet methinks his *Piety* as a *Christian*, and his *Learning* as a *Scholar*, might have skreen'd his Memory from being insulted by any Man who should ever pretend to either of those two Characters.

But I return, and proceed to put this Matter upon its last Issue.

S E C T. III.

Now, that which added to the two foregoing Considerations, should put this Case beyond all Question, is, the *general* and *current Practice*, which hath all along obtain'd, as well *before* as *after* the Delivery of these Powers to the Church, by Christ her Founder.

The

(u) John 3. 34.

The Practice which obtain'd *before*, made any general or distant Hint intelligible to those who liv'd at the Time and upon the Spot; and consequently must have known the Usages of the Age and Place they liv'd in.

The *Reason* of the Thing, the *Fitness* that somewhat of this Kind, some such Authority, as is here contended for, should be granted to the Church as a Spiritual Society, (the (v) *Weapons of whose Warfare were not therefore to be carnal*) I say, the *Reason* of the Thing would contribute a good deal to the *Explication* of any such *Power*, when it should in *Fact* be granted.

It is not here asserted, that either, or that both of these Pleas together, would have entitled the Church to an Exercise of this Jurisdiction, without a more express Conveyance of Power to her. But when the *Reason* of the Thing had suggested the *Fitness* of somewhat like it; when a Practice had moreover obtain'd, which very nearly resembled it; and when a *Precept* was deliver'd, which did manifestly enforce the Continuance of that Practice, the *Disciples of our Lord* could not well do otherwise, than it will appear they did. *Those who follow'd them*, and had Means of knowing their Opinion in any Case of Doubt, easily took it from them; and thence 'tis obvious to conceive, how the Usage should spread thro' succeeding Generations.

The (w) Author of that infamous Book, (ridiculously entitul'd, *The Rights of the Christian Church*) is so far from *denying* the Extensiveness of the Practice, that he labours to *prove* it, and quotes divers Passages from *Tacitus* of the *Ger-*
mans,

(v) 2 Cor. 10. 4.

(w) See Book of the Rights, pag. 42, 43, 96, 98, 99.

mans, from *Cesar* of the *Gauls* and *Britains*, and from *Josepbus* of the *Jews*, to confirm it, and to magnify the Horrors of an Ecclesiastical Censure: But then he would insinuate, that the *Christian* deriv'd it from the *Heathen* Priests; altho' (if such a witty Author could have haulk'd the Jest of it, and have allow'd himself to be serious) it would have look'd more probable to have said, that the *Christian* borrow'd it from the *Jewish* Priesthood. This would have carry'd some Appearance of Truth with it; and for that very Reason, 'tis not unlikely this suspicious Author might be afraid of it. Thus much however we may fairly gather from his Confession of the Practice being so general, that it seems to have been essential to religious Societies, since it was in current Use, where there could be no just Pretence of its being concerted, in so many, such various, and such distant Places.

As to the *Jews*, their Practice in this Case was notorious, at the Time when our Saviour grafted the Powers of his Church upon it. It is not material to enquire whether they had the immediate Appointment of God for such Usage or not, since it is evident from the Case of our two Sacraments, that our Saviour might and did form his own Institutions upon the Model of human Customs.

Among the *Jews*, the (x) three Degrees of this Discipline, were famous, and have been noted by all Writers, who have ever touch'd upon the Subject. Great were the Encomiums, which the *Rabbi's* of those Days bestow'd upon *Confession* and

C

Penance.

(x) *Nidui*, *Cherem*, and *Schammatha*.

Penance. (y) *Morinus* hath made large Collections out of the *Jewish* Doctors to this Purpose. There was indeed no common Place amongst them more beaten than this; so that there needed no minute nor circumstantial Explication of a *Precept*, which had already the *Comment* of current *Practice* to illustrate it.

In the Temple-Worship, 'tis plain that the Ministry of the Priest was very considerable towards the Forgiveness of Sins. (z) *The Priest* was first to *make an Atonement for the Sin*, and then the Party was to have it *forgiven* him.

The Reader shall not longer be detain'd in proving to him, what no Man, I believe, hath the Hardiness to deny of the *Jewish* Practice, both before and after the Age of the Gospel.

Now the Apostles cannot well be suppos'd to have been ignorant of what was in *daily Use* among their own Country-men. When therefore they were (themselves) to be invested with Powers of much the same Kind and Nature, they easily understood what was so familiar to them, and what from their very Infancy they had been all along acquainted with.

When it was said to them, (a) *Go ye therefore, and disciple all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* the Practice of Baptizing was so well understood, that there could be no Want of any farther Explanation.

When again it was said to them, (b) *Do this in Remembrance of me*; the *Postcænum* of Bread and Wine was an Usage so common, that there could

(y) *Morin.* Lib. 1. Cap. 20, 21, 22. de Administrat. Pœnitent.

(z) *Levitic.* 5. 10.

(a) *Mat.* 28. 19.

(b) *Luke* 22. 19.

could be no Occasion for enlarging upon it, nor for deducing it to them with any farther Particularity.

What their Sense of these Matters was, we gather from their Practice, and thence are taught to receive Members into the Church of Christ by the Ordinance of Baptism, and to continue our Fellowship with him, by *showing forth his Death*, and representing it to his Father in our Eucharistical Oblations.

Had we no Lights from History, to inform us of the *Practice* which succeeded these several *Precepts*, I very much doubt whether we should have had left amongst us any Footsteps of it, or whether we should have been able to follow without such a Guide. The Scriptures, when well understood, are indeed sufficient Directions to our Faith and Practice : But in order to understand them, proper Helps must be us'd; and among these, I know none of such Consequence, as the concurrent Voice of Antiquity.

Now to apply all this to the Matter in Hand.

The Apostles of our Lord were manifestly invested with some Powers or other, when they were authoriz'd to *bind and loose, to remit and retain Sins*. But how then shall we know what these Powers were? Whether they belong'd to the *ordinary*, or to the *extraordinary* Parts of their Office?

It hath already been observ'd, that the Apostles themselves had easy Access to the Means of knowing what was imply'd in those Powers, from the Usage of the Church they liv'd in, besides the Advantage of familiar Converse with their Master, and the Promise of being *led by his Spirit into all Truth*, when himself should leave them. So that if we can come at the

Knowledge of their Practice, we shall at least be inform'd from thence, what of Privilege, or of Power, was to *them* convey'd by the Grant of *Binding* and *Loosing*.

And if we can likewise come at the Knowledge of what their nearest Followers did in Pursuance of the Powers they receiv'd from the Apostles, and can trace the Practice downwards from the Fountain, to the Distance of 3 or 400 Years, we then shall be pretty well able to ascertain the *standing Powers* of the Church, and what was intended to be of perpetual Use in it.

For it is not imaginable, that in a Thing of this Consequence, wherein all her *external Polity* was so deeply interested, the Apostles should suffer their earliest Followers to run into manifest Error, and to continue in it, when themselves were in Possession of the Means, either to prevent or rectify it. Nor is it conceivable, that such an Error should spread universally, when Appeals might be made so easily to those, who were conversant themselves with the Persons of the Apostles, or at least receiv'd their Religion from such as were so. In a Tract of Time, 'tis intelligible enough how Truth may be corrupted: But where a *Practice of confess'd Importance* is founded upon *Precept*, and can be traced moreover to the Fountain, no Man will easily persuade me that it is not pure and genuine.

Now that the Apostles did exercise some such Authority as is here contended for, over the Christians of their Times, is evident enough, and cannot be disputed. The Case of the *incessuous Corinthian*, and the Solemnity wherewith St. Paul deliver'd him to *Satan*, may be seen in
his

his (c) first Epistle to that People; with such an one he directs his *Corinthians*, *not to keep Company, no, not to eat*, if they could well avoid it. In about a Year after, when that Discipline appear'd to have wrought its design'd Effect, we find (d) the Apostle soliciting his Restoration, (his Forgiveness) and telling the Church, that he had already forgiven him *in the Person of Christ*.

The same Apostle will furnish us with some farther Examples of the like Case, where he informs (e) *Timothy* of his having exercis'd this Discipline upon *Hymenaus* and *Alexander*, and where he (f) denounces against such *as love not the Lord Jesus*, the highest of those Ecclesiastical Censures, which were so well known to the Times he liv'd in, *viz.* That of *Anathema Maran-atba*; which (as (g) *Morinus* hath observ'd, and Mr. (h) *Selden* himself with much ado acknowledges) is easily reducible to the *Jewish Schammatha*, as the single Anathema might be to the Degree of Censure next to it, *viz.* that of *Cherem*.

Since therefore it appears, that upon the Grant of this Power to *bind and loose, to retain and remit Sins*, there did commence a Practice of *Excommunicating* and *Absolving*, answerable to, tho' not in every Circumstance exactly resembling the *Jewish* Custom, which did then obtain; since the very Terms of *Binding* and *Loosing* are confess'd, by one of our most (i) learned Adversaries, to

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be

(c) 1 Epistle, 5th Chapter.

(d) 2 Cor. 2. 10.

(e) 1 Tim. 1. 20.

(f) 1 Corinth. 16. 22.

(g) *Morin.* de Pœnitent. Lib. 4. Cap. 28.

(h) *Selden* de Synedr. Ebæcor. Lib. 1. Cap. 7.

(i) *Selden*, *ibid.*

be capable of such a Meaning, and sometimes to have been (in Fact) apply'd to express and signify it: What Room can be left for doubting, whether the Apostles did not understand our Saviour's Design in those *Terms*, to have been adopting a *Jewish* Custom into a Christian Institution?

This was no Novelty to them, as being plainly the Case of the two Sacraments; and therefore indeed the very same Principles which have serv'd Mr. *Selden* in his Attempt to prove, that the Discipline of the Apostles, and of the primitive Church, was only a spontaneous Imitation of a *Rabbinical* Practice, might have serv'd him, if he had pleas'd, in Proof of the two Sacraments being so likewise. For where at last, I would enquire, is the Difference between the two Cases? If the one was in its Original an human Institution, so it might be pleaded was the other: If the one was us'd by the *Jews* in a different Manner from what it was afterwards by the Christians, so it may be as truly said was the other: But if the two Sacraments were adopted into the Christian Church by express Authority and Warrant from Christ, so (if we may trust the Apostles as fit Interpreters of their Master's Meaning) was the Discipline for which we are now contending. We have indeed as much Evidence of their understanding his Authority to be concern'd in the one Case, as we have of their understanding it to be concern'd in the other.

What therefore Mr. *Selden* hath observ'd of the
(k) Difference between the Christian and the
Jewish

(k) Mirum erat inter Absolutionem Judaismi veteris, & eam quæ apud Christianos inoleverat, Discrimen. *Selden de Synedr. l. 1. c. 9.*

Jewish Discipline, makes rather against his Design, than any Way promotes it. For it proves, that the Christians did not use it (as he would (1) insinuate) under the Denomination of *Jews*, or as taken together for one People with them; but that they us'd it in a Manner distinct from the *Jews*, and as founded upon a different Authority.

Therefore tho' one private Man might excommunicate (and sometimes absolve) another among the *Jews*, it will not follow, that it either was or ought to be so among Christians. The Master of the Family might and did celebrate the Eucharistical Postcœnium among the *Jews*; but when that Ceremony was transplanted into the *Christian Church*, this Circumstance in it was alter'd, and the Celebration was apparently reserv'd to the chief Minister of the Church.

Mr. *Selden* (*m*) confesses, that there was a very general and current Departure of the *Christian* from the *Jewish* Usage of this Discipline, in the second Century, though he cannot give us the precise Æra of the Change when made. But yet he would expect his Reader should grant him,

C 4

(1) *Judeorum nomine Christianos pariter contineri, merito sentiunt eruditi. ibid.*

(*m*) Quandonam primo Discrepantia ejusmodi inter Christianos & Judaicos, seu vetustioris Excommunicationis effectus inciperet, non quidem satis liquet, sed ante Origenis ac Tertulliani, etiam & Irenæi tempora, effectum, quoad sacrorum Communionis negationem, inolevisse non dubitandum. Ignatiana quæ extant non habent unde satis hic doceamur. Occurrit quidem apud Justinum Martyrem, Irenæo paulo antiquiorem, in Apologia ejus secunda locus, quo dicitur, ut tunc receptissimum, alios quàm qui juxta Christi Disciplinam crederent ac viverent, participes fieri non debere Eucharistie. *ibid.*

him, what he acknowledges himself unable to prove, (n) that the Apostles us'd this Ceremony of Excommunication, just as their Brethren the *Jews* did, without the least Variation. He says he cannot conceive that they should use it in any Respect otherwise. But why could he not as well have conceiv'd they should depart in this from their Brethren, as they apparently did in many other Usages, which yet were originally deriv'd from *Jewish* Customs?

I can as little conceive, that the Christians who liv'd so near the Time of the Apostles, as *Irenaeus* and *Justin* did, should chuse to depart from the Model they had receiv'd from the Apostles of Christ, as Mr. *Selden* could conceive of the Apostles themselves, that they should depart in the least Tittle from the Custom of their Country-men.

When Mr. *Selden* was at any Time press'd with apparent Fact and History, it was always his Custom to run his Reader into the Dark, and there to leave him to shift for himself; or else to catch at Innuendo's and Conjectures, which he was ever ready to furnish, at the Expence of all Probability, so he might disserve the Church, which he mortally hated.

In a Thing so material as this was, it is utterly indeed incredible, that there should be a Departure from an Apostolical Usage, the Reason of which was then as much in Force as ever; and yet that no Noise should be made of it, nor any Clue be given, to lead us into the precise *Æra*, or Occasion of the Change. If this be

(n) Haud concipiendum videtur Apostolos — inter se non jure Judaico in Excommunicationis suae poenis exercendis usos esse, idq; omni modo ut Judæi faciebant reliqui. *ibid.* in Cap. 8.

be once allow'd as fairly supposable, there will be an End of proving any ancient Practice. The first Writers of our Religion had so much Work upon their Hands, that they had little Time to be particular in their Accounts of any Thing; and it had been absurd besides, to have *professedly* told the Men of that Generation what were the current Customs of the Time they liv'd in; so that if they *occasionally* mention such Customs, 'tis all we can expect; and if others who came after them, speak more fully to such Points, we must either join their Evidence together, or be content to know nothing of the ancient Church.

Now Mr. *Selden* always makes his Advantage of a dark Period, to mislead his Reader by his own Conjectures, and to supply the *Want* of *Evidence* with *abundance* of *Fancy*; whereas the proper Course had surely been to have led his Reader gradually to the Light, as it should appear to open; and since there is some Necessity of *supposing*, where *Proof* is *wanting*, to have rather *suppos'd* the Usage of the second, the same with that of the first Century, than to have suggested a Change, where none could be prov'd.

But when Men are bent upon an Hypothesis, all their Talents and all their Learning shall be press'd into the Service, and forc'd upon being *Parties*, when they should be *Judges*.

But to return. It is not, for the Reasons given, to be at all admir'd, that what the Apostles and their earliest Converts did in Prosecution of the Trust repos'd in them, should come to our Knowledge by such broken Parcels. Yet as to their actual Exercise of the Discipline which is our present Subject, there is ample Evidence. We have seen, nor is it deny'd, that the

the Apostles us'd it; and we shall see that their nearest *Followers* took it from them, and handed it down from themselves to *others*.

We will begin with the earliest, *viz.* *Clemens Romanus*, who was Cotemporary with the Apostles, much acquainted and conversant with them, and is accordingly mention'd by St. *Paul* with Honour, *Philip*. 4. 3. His Epistle was read together with the Scriptures for some Ages in the Church; and the first Copy we ever had of it, was found annex'd to a Volume of the *New Testament*; so that upon all Accounts his Testimony should carry great Weight with it.

Now, in that Epistle to the *Corinthians*, which is unquestionably his, we have a Passage much to our present Purpose, where addressing himself to the principal Abettors of the Schism there, he bespeaks them in these Words: (o) *Do ye therefore who laid the first Foundation of these Broils, submit your selves to your Priests, and be disciplin'd unto Penance, bending the Knees of your Hearts, and laying aside all indecent Arrogance of Speech, learn to be obedient. For it is better to be found in the Flock of Christ little, so you be withal approv'd there, than to be cast out of his Fold [or Enclosure] for your Pride and Misbehaviour.*

This

(o) Ὑμεῖς ὅν οἱ τὴ καὶ ἀρχὴν τὴ σαύσεως ποιήσαντες ὑποτάγητε τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις, καὶ παιδεύθητε εἰς μετανοίαν, καμψάντες τὰ γόνατα τὴ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν μαθήτε ὑποτασσέσθαι, ἀποδέμενοι τὴ ἀλάστον καὶ ὑποφρονον τὴ γλώσσης ὑμῶν αὐθάρδειαν ἄμενον γὰρ ἐσιν ὑμῶν ἐν τῷ ποιμνίῳ τῷ Χριστῷ μικροὶ καὶ ἑλλογίμως εὐγεθῆναι, ἢ κατὰ ὑποφροῶν δοκῶντας ἐκλεφθῆναι ἐκ τῆ ἐκκλησίας αὐτῆς. or, as the learned Editor amends it, κατὰ δὲ, or ἐκκλησίας αὐτῆς. Clement. 1 Epist. ad Corinth. Edit. Patric. Young. A. D. 1633.

This manifestly refers to the penitential Discipline, of which we have a farther Account in succeeding Writers. He exhorts them (we see) to *submit to Discipline*; so that a Discipline there was then in Use, and it consisted in expelling Offenders from the *Fold* of Christ; or rather from that *Enclosure*, which parted the *Faithful* from *Penitents* and *Hearers* in the Assemblies for Worship.

I have ventur'd to depart a little from the Translation of (p) a learned Writer, now a Right Reverend Prelate of our Church, (for whose Person, and Character, and great Accomplishments, I have otherwise all possible Regard.) His Lordship hath been pleas'd to render the Words, (Ἰταδεύετε εἰς μετάνοιαν) *Be instructed unto Repentance*, which is indeed literally true, tho' here, I conceive with great Submission, not quite so proper. For among Ecclesiastical Writers, his Lordship very well knows, that the *Latin Pœnitentia*, and the *Greek Μετάνοια*, do often, indeed usually, refer to the *outward Discipline of Repentance*, which we call *Penitence* or *Penance*: And indeed by this very Author, the Word *ἰταδεύετε* is apply'd just before (in no fewer, I think, than six several Passages) to signify *Correction*, rather than *Instruction*. He is labouring in them to shew these *Corinthians* the Advantages of *Correction*, and thence perswading them, in the Passage I now have cited, to submit to it.

Whether the second Epistle ascrib'd to St. *Clement* be really his, I will not undertake to determine

(p) Dr. Wake, now Lord Bishop of Lincoln's genuine Epistles of the first Fathers translated, A. D. 1693. N. B. The second Edition is here the same.

mine between two such Men as (q) *Cotelerius* and Arch-Bishop *Usher*. But be it whose it will, it is certainly the Work of some ancient Author; tho' (r) *Eusebius* does indeed doubt of its being our St. *Clement's*, because he did not find it quoted as such by preceding Writers. This Author then, whoever he may be, mentions the (s) *Exomologesis*, or solemn Confession, to be in his Time, what afterwards it was so well and so indisputably known to be, viz. an Attendant upon the penitential Discipline.

Hermas was Cotemporary with St. *Clement*, had the Honour of an Apostolical Salutation, (*Rom.* 16. 14.) and of great Esteem paid both to his Memory and to his Writings, by those who liv'd near him. However, because some have, with great Boldness and Rashness, objected to this venerable Apostolick Person, that he was a Man of slender Talents, and a visionary Writer, I will say, once for all, of *Him*, what I would be understood to mean of the rest, that I cite him as a *Witness*, but do not appeal to him as a *Judge*. Now, if a Witness be but faithful, it is all we expect from him in that Capacity. *Faith*, not *Right*, is what we are to enquire of him; and it requires no great Extent of Knowledge to inform us of that.

He

(q) Vide Coteler. Judicium de Posteriore Epistolâ S. Clementis & Usser. Dissertat. Oxon. Edit. 1644.

(r) ἵστον δ' αὖς καὶ διατίθηται τις εἶναι λέγειναι τῷ Κλήμεντι ὁπισθολῇ. εἰ μὴ ἔστι ὁμοίως τῇ περὶ τῶν καὶ ταύτων γνώριμον ὁπισθόμεθα, ὅτι μὴ δὲ τὸ ἀρχαῖον αὐτῇ κεκληρημένον ἴσμεν. Euseb. l. 3. c. 38.

(s) Μετὰ γὰρ τὸ ἔχειν ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῷ κόσμῳ, ἐκείνη δύναμεθα εἰπεῖν, ἔξομολογήσασθαι ἢ μετανοεῖν. Clement. in Epist. 2. ad Corinth. Sect. 8. Coteler.

He then, speaking of Repentance after Baptism, hath these Words: (t) *If any one after that great and holy Calling, shall be tempted by the Devil, and so shall fall into Sin, he hath but one Repentance.* He had said a little before, that to the Servants of God there is but one Repentance. Here, I think, he must be understood as referring to the outward Discipline of Penance; that as Baptism, so Penance was but once administer'd; which well agrees with what we find afterwards, in later Writers, viz. *Tertullian, Ambrose, and Austin*, concerning this Administration, that it was allow'd but once, or at most but once for the same Offence. He cannot be suppos'd to have meant, that Sorrow for Sin, and Resolutions of Amendment might never be repeated after a single Crime, since of such he does not *peremptorily* pronounce as to their Acceptance with God. He does indeed represent the (u) *Difficulty*, but meddles not with the *Possibility* of it, inasmuch as the Mercies of God might possibly enough accept the Persons of those, whom the Church, for Example's, and for Order's sake, was oblig'd to continue in a State of Separation. The Church herein dealt with her Members after Penance, as the *Montanists* and *Novatians* did with their Partizans in the Case of Sin after Baptism, viz. Allow'd them to hope for Mercy from God upon their *penitential Mortifications*, but admitted them not to her own Communion. Here therefore I apprehend a clear and apparent Reference to the *Discipline of Penitence, or Penance.*

The

(t) *Ideo dico tibi quod post vocationem illam magnam & sanctam, si quis tentatus fuerit à Diabolo, & peccaverit, unam pœnitentiam habet. Herm. Pastor. Lib. 2. Mandat. 4. Servus Dei una pœnitentia est. ibid.*

(u) *Difficile vivet Deo. ibid.*

The same Author hath (v) elsewhere spoken clearly and fully to the Practice of separating Offenders for some Time from the Church. *Who are they, (he asks) who are rejected from the Tower, (which in that Vision signifies the Church) and are plac'd near it, but not in it? He is answer'd, They are such as have sinn'd, and would afterwards do Penance for their Fault. They are therefore (tis observ'd) not put far out, because upon their Penitence, they may be useful in the Fabrick, which is there represented as building. Again, Do you think, (says the Person there introduc'd to Hermas) that those who do Penance, are presently forgiven? No! for such must afflict their Souls, and humble themselves, and go thro' many Severities; and when they have submitted to every Thing appointed for them, then perhaps he who made and fashion'd them, will have Mercy upon them, and administer to them some Remedy. What is appointed for them, denotes to us the Rigours which were even then enjoin'd them.*

St. Ignatius hath some Passages to our present Purpose, which because they refer to the Agency of the Bishop in the Sinner's Repentance, the Reader will find cited at his Entrance upon the last

(v) Quos autem rejiciebant & ponebant juxta turrim, qui sunt illi? Ii sunt qui peccaverunt, & voluerunt poenitentiam agere. Propter hoc non sunt longè projecti à turri, quoniam utiles erunt in structurâ si poenitentiam egerint. *ibid.* Lib. 1. Vision. 3.

Nunquid ergo, ait, protinus putas aboleri delicta eorum qui agunt poenitentiam? Non proinde continuò; sed oportet eum qui agit poenitentiam affligere animam suam & humilem se præstare in omni negotio, & vexationes multas variasq; perferre; cumq; perpassus fuerit omnia, quæ illi instituta fuerint, tunc forsitan qui eum creavit, & qui formavit universa, commovebitur erga eum clementiâ suâ & aliquod remedium dabit. *ibid.* in Lib. 3. Similitud. 7.

last Section of the second Part of the next Chapter.

There he may observe, that the *Bishop's Authority was to be recogniz'd in this Affair, as well as God's; that nothing was to be done in the Church without the Bishop, and that such as deny'd his Authority, were to be cut off from the Body of Christ, i. e. were to receive the highest Sentence of Excommunication, and to continue under it, 'till they should make their Submissions, and be allow'd to re-enter the Church thro' the Door of Penance.* Other Writers between these and St. *Justin the Martyr*, are so very concise, and we have so little of them remaining to us, besides Fragments, that we are not to wonder, if we meet with no Account of this Usage in them. What hath been already cited, was written *occasionally*, and upon no *profess'd* Design of acquainting us with what we infer from thence.

But St. *Justin the Martyr* (who flourish'd about the Middle of the second Century) will inform us, that it was the Usage of his Time to admit none to the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, but such as believ'd in his Doctrine, and liv'd conformably to his Appointments. (w) *This Food* (says he) *is call'd among us the Eucharist, which none are suffer'd to partake of, but those who believe the Truth of our Doctrines, and are wash'd in the sacred Laver of Regeneration, for the Remission of Sins, and live moreover as Christ hath commanded.* (x)

(w) ἡ τροφή αὕτη καλεῖται παρ' ἡμῶν εὐχαριστία· ἥς εἰδέναι ἀλλοτριὰ μετὰ χεῖρ ἔχοντες ἢ καὶ πιστεύοντι ἀλλοτρίῃ εἶναι τὰ διδασκόμενα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, καὶ λυσσαμένῳ τῷ ὑπὲρ ἀφίσσεως αἱμαρτωλῶν, καὶ εἰς ἀναγέννησιν, λουτρῶν, καὶ ὅπως βιῶντι ὡς ὁ Χριστὸς παρέδωκε. Justin. Martyr. in Apol. 2. versus finem, pag. 97, 98. Colign. Edit. 1680.

(*) Mr. *Selden* would *shade* (if he could) the *Light* of this Evidence, by observing, "That
 " Infidels and Heathens are here mention'd, as
 " Persons excluded from the Privilege of this
 " Communion; and that therefore the Passage
 " cannot refer to a Discipline, which never was
 " exercis'd upon such as *were without*."

But might not (I would ask) those *within* be
occasionally excluded, notwithstanding that those
without were *never admitted*? Because Heathens
 and Infidels were *not allow'd* to communicate,
 does it therefore follow, that Christians who led
 ill Lives *were allow'd* to communicate? The Pas-
 sage indeed does rather prove, that *wicked Be-*
lievers were rank'd in the same Class with *Hea-*
thens and *Unbelievers*; that as the *one did not*, so
 the *other might not* partake of the holy Elements.

It is hence, upon the whole, very certain,
 that Men who were known to live scandalous-
 ly, tho' they *believ'd*, and *were baptiz'd*, yet might
 not (were not *permitted* to) communicate; and
 what at last is this, but to be *excluded*? One
 Man might indeed be *excluded* by his own Choice,
 or thro' his own Neglect, as Heathens, or care-
 less Christians were; yet surely this hinders
 not, but that others might be excluded by *Force*,
 and by a *judicial Sentence* of the Church upon
 them.

St. *Irenaus* liv'd a little after St. *Justin*, being
 promoted to the Episcopal See of *Lyons*, A. D.
 178; and he speaks full to the Usage of *pub-*
lick

(*) Certè Justinus ibi expressim loquitur non solum de
 Baptizatis, verum pariter de non Baptizatis, ad quos excom-
 municatio reverà, apud Christianos, non magis attinuit quàm
 apud Judæos ad Gentiles necdum circumcisos. *Selden* de Sy-
 nedr. lib. 1. cap. 9.

lick Penance, as in his Days a current Practice. (y) With these Words and Actions they (says he) (viz. the Disciples of Marcus) have led away divers Women into their Error, who having their Consciences canteriz'd (as it were) with a burning Instrument, have, some of them, perform'd publick Penance, whilst others not abiding the Shame of it, and despairing of Mercy, have either quite revolted from the Faith, or else are wavering and undetermin'd, and so are neither directly in the Church, nor yet quite out of it; and this they gain from their Commerce with these Sons of Knowledge.

He had a little before, in the very same Book and Chapter, "recited the Case of a certain Deacon's Wife, whom Marcus had corrupted, both in her Principles and in her Person. This Woman being brought with much ado to a Sense of her Crime, pass'd her whole Life in penitential Humiliations, and in that

D "solemn

(y) Talia autem dicentes & operantes — multas seduxerunt mulieres quæ cauteriatis conscientias habentes, quædam quidem etiam in manifesto Exomologesi faciunt, quædam autem reverentes hoc ipsum, in silentio sensim semetipsas retrahunt, desperantes à vitâ Dei; quædam quidem in totum abscesserunt; quædam autem inter utrumq; dubitantes, & quod est proverbii passæ sunt, neq; intus neq; foris existentes, hunc fructum habentes seminis filiorum Agnitionis. *Irena. lib. 1. cap. 9.*

Cum esset uxor ejus. (viz. Diaconi) speciosa, & sententiâ & corpore, corrupta esset à mago isto & secuta eum esset multo tempore; post deinde cum magno labore fratres eam convertissent, omne tempus in Exomologesi consummavit plangens & lamentans ob hanc quam passæ est ab hoc mago corruprelam. *ibid.*

Cerdon autem — Sæpe in Ecclesiam veniens, & Exomologesi faciens, sic consummavit, modò quidem latenter docens, modò verò Exomologesi faciens, modò verò ab aliquibus traductus in his quæ docebat malè, & absentus est à Religiosorum hominum conventu. *ibid. lib. 3. cap. 4.*

"solemn Exomologesis, which was a known Attendant upon them." Whether she might not in her last Moments be reconcil'd, the Father hath took no Notice.

The Account he hath given us of *Cerdon*, the Heretick, is much the same with what he had before given of the Women seduced by *Marcus*, viz. "That at sometimes he would submit to the penitential Discipline, and at other Times was not in Humour for it; but instead of it, would repeat the Crime for which it was enjoind him, 'till at length he was entirely cut off from Ecclesiastical Communion." Thus far then we are pretty clear in the Practice, which is the Subject of our present Enquiry.

The Apostolical Canons are generally look'd upon as Abridgments of the several Rules and Orders, which, from Time to Time, were occasionally prescrib'd for the Government of the Church, from its very Infancy down to that Period, wherein they were first collected into a Body, which (in all Likelihood) was done about the latter End of the second, or the Beginning of the third Century; so that wherever they speak clear to any Practice, they must be allow'd as *competent Witnesses* and good Vouchers.

Now, here almost every Canon is pointed with the Penalty, of Segregation. The 8th (z) "will not allow a Man to join so much as in Family-Prayer with a Person excommunicate, without incurring the same Sentence." And the
(a)

(z) "Εἰ τις ἀκκοινωνητός, καὶ ἐν οἴκῳ συνευξήται, καὶ αὐτὸς αἰσθῆται τοῦ ἁγίου. Can. Apostol. No. 8.

(a) 10th determines, that " if a Person actually " segregated in one Church, or whose Case was " yet depending, should depart to another, and " should there be receiv'd without commendatory " Letters, the *Receiver* and the *Received* should " share in the same Punishment; and if the lat- " ter should prove already to have been excom- " municate, that he should continue so much the " longer under his Sentence. "

Origen speaks home to this Usage in his third Book against Celsus. (b) *How severe* (says he) *is the Discipline of Christians against Offenders, especially against such as offend by Incontinence, who are expell'd from all Communion with us, by those whom Celsus compares to Mountebanks and Jugglers? If the venerable Institution of Pythagoras did set up Burial-Monuments for such as departed from the Rules of that Profession, in like Manner we Christians lament and mourn for those who yield to Lust, or to any other Enormity, as lost and dead to God; and up-*

D 2

on

(a) "Εἰ τις κληρικός ἢ λαϊκός ἀφωρεσθῆναι, ἢ τοι ἀδελφῶν, ἀπέλθῃν ἐν ἑτέρᾳ πόλει δεχθῇ ἄνευ γραμμᾶς τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἀφωρεζέσθω· οἱ δεξάμενοι καὶ οἱ δεχθεῖς· εἰ δὲ ἀφωρεσθῆναι ἢ ἐπιτενέσθω αὐτῷ ὁ ἀφωρεσμός, ὡς ψευσαμένῳ καὶ ἀπατήσαντι ἐκκλησίαν θεῷ. *ibid.* No. 10.

(b) διαδ' ὅταν αὐτοὶ ἀγωγή καὶ πᾶσι αἰμαρηνόντες καὶ μά- λιστα τῆς ἀπλάστωνόντων, ὅς ἀπαλαύνῃσι τὸ κοινὸν οἱ καὶ αἱ Κέλσον παρὰ πλῆθος τοῖς ἐν τῇ ἀγορῇ ταῖς ἐπιβήτοτασι ὀπίθεν- μύοις; καὶ τὸ μὲν τῆς Πυθαγορείων σεμνὸν διδάσκαλον κωτοάφισ- τῆς ὁμοσάντων τῶν φιλοσοφίας κατεσκεύαζε, λογιζομένων· νεκρὸς αὐτὸς γεγονέναι· εἶποι δὲ ὡς διαπολωτός καὶ τεθνηκώς τῷ θεῷ τὸς αὐτῶν ἀσελγείας ἢ τινος αὐτοῦ πενικημένους ὡς νεκρὸς πένθησι· καὶ ὡς ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάντας, ἐὰν ἀξιόλογον ἐνδείξωμαι μεταβολὴν· χάρις πᾶσι τοῖς τῆς κατ' ἀρχαίας· εἰσαγωγῶν ὕψος τῶν πρε- σβυτέρων· εἰς δεξιὰν αἰσθῆναι καὶ πρὸς αἰσθῆναι τὴν λεγομένην ἐκκλη- σίαν τὴν θεῷ καταλέγουσαν τὸς ὁμολογούντας, μετὰ τὸ πρὸς ἐκκλη- σίαν τῷ λόγῳ ἐπακέναι. *Origen. contra Cels. Lib. 3.*

on Proof of their Change for the better, we receive them again, like Persons risen from the Dead, tho' not 'till after a longer Time of Tryal, than that which preceded their first Admission into the Christian Communion; and even then we receive them upon the Condition of their being quite excluded from all Office and Dignity in the Church of God, since they have happen'd to behave themselves amiss in it.

Tertullian hath a Passage to much the same Purpose, which effectually proves the Practice we are now considering. (c) *There also (viz. in the publick Assemblies for Christian Worship) are Exhortations, Rebukes, and the Great Holy Censure: For Sentence there is pass'd with the utmost Gravity and Consideration, as among a People who are always sensible, that they are in the Presence of God; and it is esteem'd a notable Presumption, that the Judgment of God will confirm the Sentence thus pass'd by Man, when any one so offends amongst us, as to be cut off from all Communion, both in Prayer, and in assembling our selves together, and in all holy Offices whatsoever.*

The following Writers of the Church speak so full and home to our present Subject, that I will not so far abuse my Reader's Patience, nor suspect his Knowledge, as to labour the Proof of such an evident Case. Besides, I shall have Occasion to use the Testimony both of the foregoing, and of the subsequent Fathers, when I come to explain the *Manner* wherein this Discipline was anciently exercis'd; so that I shall need at present to produce no further Testimonies out of the

(c) *Ibidem etiam exhortationes, castigationes, & censura Divina. Nam & judicatur magno cum pondere; ut apud certos de Dei conspectu, summumq; futuri judicii præjudicium est, si quis ita deliquerit, ut à Communionem orationis & conventus, & omnis sacri commercii relegatur. Tertullian. Apologetic. advers. Gent. cap. 39.*

the one or the other, since the Thing it self is ever *suppos'd*, when the *Manner* of it, and the Circumstances relating to it, come to be represented. To sum up then the Evidence of this whole Chapter.

We have seen it to be fit in Point of Reason,

1. That the Church, as a Society, should enjoy the Powers which are necessary to her own Support and Preservation, as well as that some Powers, or other, *are* necessary to this Purpose; tho' it would not hence indeed be determin'd what those Powers in particular should be, or after what Manner the Church should use them. Therefore,

2. We have had Recourse to her Charter, and thence have endeavour'd to trace what we could of the Powers which therein were granted to her. And because some Doubt might arise upon the *Terms* wherein that *Grant* is couch'd and worded, if we had no Helps to lead us into their just Meaning and Importance; therefore,

3. We have examin'd *what* was in Fact the Usage of the Times when that Grant was made, (because the Grant may well be suppos'd to have referr'd to it) and *what* again was the Practice of the Times next *immediately succeeding* it; because the *Practice* which commences immediately upon a *Precept*, the *Privilege* enjoy'd, or the *Power* exercis'd next after a *Grant*, must be confess'd the most likely to reach its *Meaning*. It is so in all other Cases; and the Reason holds as well in this, as in any other. I know of nothing which may not be disputed, if such Evidence as this shall not be accepted.

Taking it then henceforwards for granted, that the Church hath this Power of censuring her scandalous

dalous Members, of *excluding them* from her Communion, and of *restoring them* to it upon their humble Submissions, we are next to enquire after what Manner she exercis'd this Power, that so we may the better guess at the Extent of it, and recommend it the more effectually to the present Generation.

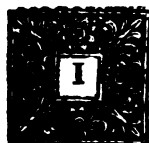


C. H. A. P.



C H A P. II.

Of the Use which the Church made of this Power, and of the Manner wherein she exerted it, for the first 400 Years wherein she enjoy'd it.



It hath already been observ'd, and indeed it is known to all who have in any Measure acquainted themselves with the first Writers of the Church, how concise and short their Accounts of Things are, how occasionally mention'd, and how little circumstantial. They had no Time nor Leisure to write either Histories or Systems; so that what we gather from them, must be glean'd from accidental Hints, and improv'd by the latter Evidence of the Times and Authors which succeeded.

What we learn of the Discipline which is our present Subject, from the earliest Writers, that, in *Fact* there was such a *Thing* in Use, must therefore be explain'd in its *Manner* and *Circumstances*, by the Testimony of those who liv'd nearest to them, and have transmitted to us an Account of such Practices as obtain'd in the Age which themselves liv'd in.

If *St. Clement* (for Instance) acquaints us, that there was in his Time such an Usage as Expulsion from the Church of Christ; and if *Origen* or *Tertullian* give Evidence of the *Manner* wherein that Discipline was, in their Time, exercis'd, it is fairly to be presum'd, that no material Change was made in the Circumstantials of it, at any Time intervening, between those several Authors. *Apostolical Usages* could not well be alter'd in so short an Interval, without some Noise or Notice, or some Reason given for the Departure from them.

If this Presumption be not allow'd me, I see not how we shall come at the Knowledge of any Practice in the ancient Church.

The first Writers will at most but barely mention it; they will not descend to Circumstances, nor minutely acquaint us with its several Particularities; so that if those who follow'd them, be not permitted to fill up the Gaps of their Predecessors Evidence, we must be in the Dark, and resolve to continue so.

Indeed that Evidence is always best and purest, which approaches nearest to the Fountain; and we esteem our selves very happy, whenever we are in Reach of it: But as the *Streams* are there very narrow, and often imperceptible, we must be content to take of them, when spread to a farther Distance, and when the Enlargement of their *Channel* hath made Access to them more practicable and easy.

There are several Things in our present Enquiry, which it will be impossible to trace out of the earliest Writers; not because they were not then in Use, but because those Authors had no *Occasion* of mentioning them in the short Remains which are left to us.

The

Part I. *Of the Primitive Church.* 41

The Reader therefore is now, I hope, prepar'd and dispos'd to accept the Testimonies of *Origen*, *Tertullian*, *St. Cyprian*, &c. instead of *St. Clement*, or *Hermas*, or any of the few Writers in the first Age, as to the *Manner* and Circumstance of that Discipline, the Use whereof those first Writers attest, tho' they do not describe it in all its Parts and Dimensions.

What I would enquire from them in this Chapter, I shall divide into two Parts.

1. What were the constituent Parts of the Discipline in Question.
2. What were the Crimes for which it was inflicted, and in whose Hands the Ministration (or Execution) of it was lodg'd.

If we can come at any satisfactory Answer to these Enquiries, I presume we shall be competently acquainted with the Regimen of the ancient Church in the Point we are now debating.

P A R T I.

What were the constituent Parts of the Discipline in Question.

IT will here be fit, at my Entrance into this Part of our present Query, that I should once for all observe upon *Excision*, or the *biggest Sentence* of *Excommunication*, that it was never pronounc'd, except where the Case was desperate, either by the Obstinacy of the Party in refusing Admonition, or else by the Severity of the Church-Regimen, which admitted her Members but once to *solemn Penance*.

It

It will indeed appear hereafter, that it was the Use of some particular Churches, to deny Communion to their Members, and finally to persist in that Denial upon their Commission of certain enormous Crimes: But then such a Practice does not appear to have been general, as it will be seen in the Sequel.

Excommunication was usually intended to bring Men to *Submission*; upon which they were gradually receiv'd, as they pass'd thro' the several Courses of penitential Discipline assign'd to them.

For when a Crime was any way known to be committed, which was thought to deserve a Censure, the Apostolical Constitutions will inform us, that (d) (if the Party came not of his own Accord) "He was conven'd by the Bishop, first
" in Secret, and if he thereupon submitted and
" reform'd, all was well; otherwise he was to be
" admonished, and perswaded in the Presence of
" two or three Witnesses; and if those Endeavours prov'd ineffectual, the whole Church was
to

(d) Μόνον πρὸς ἁγιάζων τὴ κατήγορησέναι, ἐλεγξον αὐτὸν ὅπως μελαγχολῶ, μηδενός σοι συμπαραρόντι· εἰ δὲ ὃ πειθεῖται γενόμενός· δαίτερός· ἢ τέρτος· ἄνω αὐτῷ ἀποδείξον τὸ πηλομενέμας, να· θείησας αὐτὸν ἐν πρᾶσότητι καὶ παιδείᾳ. — Ἐάν ἐν πειθῇ ὅπτι σόμωσι τὴ τριῶν ὑμῶν, εὖ αὖν ἔχοι· εἰ δὲ τις σκληρονοῖα, εἰπέ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ· εἰ αὖ καὶ τὴ ἐκκλησίας πρὸς ἑκάστης, ἔσω σοι ὡς εἰ ἐθνικός καὶ ὁ τελώτης· καὶ μετέτι αὐτὸν ὡς Χριστιανὸν ἀποδέχῃς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐθνικὸν ἀποδείξῃ· εἰ δὲ βέλτοις με· τανοεῖν, πρὸς ἁγιάζων. In Apostol. Constitut. lib. 7. cap. 37 καὶ 38. and ibid. in cap. 39.

ὡς τελώτην εἶναι ἢ ἐθνικὸν ἔχει τὸ ὅπτι κακῶς ἔργα ἐλεγχθῆται καὶ καὶ μελαγχολήσῃ· εἰ αὖ ἐς ἑσπέρην μελαγχολῇ καὶ ὅπτι πρὸς τὸ πηλάνης, ὡς καὶ πρὸς ἐθνικὸν, ὁπόταν θείησας μελανοεῖν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν πρὸς ἀποδέχόμεθα, ὅπως τῷ λόγῳ ἀκέρῳσιν, ὃ μὴ κοινῶν ἡμῶν αἰ· τοῖς,

“ to be acquainted with his Case, and to be interested in it ; and then if he still continu’d obstinately resolv’d against Submission after these joint Endeavours to mollify him, the highest Sentence of Excommunication was finally to be pronounc’d against him ; under which he was to continue, as much disregarded as a meer Heathen, ’till he was soften’d into Submission, and bent to the Discipline ; ” upon whose Description we are now entering. And when he so submitted, there were various Degrees of Penance assign’d him, in Proportion to the Crime, wherewith either his own Confession, or another’s Accusation, or the plain Notoriety of Fact had charg’d him.

Whilst he was under the highest Sentence of Excommunication, the Church had no further Care of him, than of an Heathen ; but when that had wrought its intended Effect, and melted him into penitential Submissions, then as he was first receiv’d into the Church thro’ the Door of *Baptism*, so he was here restor’d to it thro’ that of *Penance*.

The

τοῖς μέλεσιν ἃ τὸ σφοδρὸν λαβόντες τελειωθῶσιν· ἔτι καὶ τοῖς τοῖς μέλεσιν ἃ μελανόιας κατὰν ἐπαδείξωσιν ἐπιτρέπουσιν εἰς σέβαστον, ὅπως τὸ λόγος ἀκαίοντες μὴ τελείας ἀρδὴν ἀπολύνται· μὴ κοινωρεῖται δὲ ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ, ἀλλ’ ἔξερχόμεθα· μετὰ τὸ ἀνάγνωσιν τῶ νόμου, καὶ τῆς προφητείας, καὶ τῆς εὐαγγελίας, ὅπως διὰ τῆς ἐξῆς βελτιωθῶσι τὸ ἀναστροφῇ τῆ βίης, σπουδαίοντες πρὸς τὰς συνάξεις ἀπαντᾶν ὁσημέρως, καὶ τῇ δέήσει χροάζων, ὅπως καὶ αὐτοὶ διωκῶσιν αἰσδεχθῆναι, καὶ οἱ θωμένοι αὐτὸς καλῶνται, καὶ ἀσφαλῆς γίνωνται, ἐλαβεμένοι παῖς, ὁμοίως περιπεσεῖν. *ibid.* iterum, in cap. 41.

εἰν δὲ τινα ἀμελῶς ἔχοντα βλέπεις, καὶ ἀπεισκληροκότα, τότε μετὰ λύπης καὶ πένθους ἀνιότως ἔχοντα, τὸ ἐκκλησίας ἀπορῶσι. See moreover cap. 16. *ibid.* cited in p. 45. Note m.

The constituent Parts of which Discipline, were these three, 1. (e) Confession. 2. Segregation. 3. Absolution.

S E C T. I. *Of Confession.*

This was either *publick* or *private*. The publick (as *Tertullian* speaks of it) (f) *was a Discipline impos'd and intended to bow down and humble Men, and so to move Compassion in the Church of God for them.* He, as well as *Ambrose* and *Austin* after him, speak much of the Austerities and Shame which attended it; but then what of this Kind was *publick*, and in the Face of the Congregation, will more properly be consider'd when we come to the second constituent Part of this Discipline, wherein it had so large a Share, and made such an eminent Figure.

Now, besides this, there was a very early Practice of *voluntary* Confession, which was sometimes *publick*, and sometimes *private* only; of both which we meet with Testimonies approaching so near the Fountain, that they almost mix with it.

In (g) *Origen's* second Homily upon the 37th Psalm, there are some noble Passages to our present Purpose: If any one (says he) be so well dispos'd, as to come forth and accuse himself, when he is conscious of any Crime committed by him, and if then his Friends and Acquaintance, instead of sympathizing

(e) (1.) Ἐξομολόγησις, or ἑξαγόρευσις. (2.) ἀφορισμός. (3.) λυσις.

(f) Exomologesis prosternendi & humiliificandi Hominis Disciplina est, conversationem injungens Misericordiae illi-
cem. *Tertull.* de Poenitentia. cap. 9.

(g) Si ergo sit aliquis ita fidelis, ut si quid conscius sit sibi, procedat in medium, & ipse sui Accusator existat; hi autem qui futurum Dei judicium non metuunt, hæc audientes, cum in-

thizing with his Affliction, shall stand off from him on that Account, he should not be concern'd at it, nor ought he to regard their Scoffs, nor their Censure, but he should rather look up to God, and regard his own Soul, and the Peace of it. Thus again a little after: — Let my Kindred, if they please, forsake me, and stand as far off, whilst I obtain of my self to be my own Accuser, and to confess my Faults, when no one else would accuse me for them; whilst I do not imitate those, who, when arraign'd, and even convicted by clear Evidence, would fain notwithstanding conceal their Crimes.

But most of all, and most clearly to our Purpose, is the following Passage: *As they who are troubled with Indigestion, and have any Thing within them which lies crude upon their Stomachs, are not reliev'd but by proper Evacuations; so Sinners, who conceal their Practices, and retain them within their own Breasts, feel in themselves an inward Disquietude,*
and

infirmantibus quidem non infirmentur, cum scandalizantibus non urantur, cum lapsis non jaceant, sed dicant longè refac à me, neq; accedas ad me, quoniam mundus sum, & detestari incipiunt eum, quem ante admirabantur, & ab amicis recedunt ejus, qui delictum suum noluit occultare. — Hæc non oportet formidare eum, qui post delictum salvari cupit. — Non ergo cogitet de talibus, sed cogitet de animâ suâ, exorans Deum, ut ab ipso exaudiat & sublevetur post casum suum. *Origen. in Psal. 37. Hom. 2. Latin. Basil. Edit. Tom. 1.*

Licet amici mei & proximi mei contrarii sint, & propinqui mei longè se faciant à me, dum ego ipse mei Accusator efficior, dum crimina mea nullo me arguente confiteor, dum nolo imitari eos qui etiam cum in judiciis arguantur, & testibus convincantur, & tortoribus etiam arguantur, regunt tamen mala sua. *ibid.*

Sicut ii qui habent intus inclusam escam indigestam aut Humoris vel Phlegmatis Stomacho graviter & molestè imminentem, si vomuerint, relevantur; ita etiam hi qui peccaverunt, siquidem occultant & retinent intra se peccatum, intrinsecus

and are almost choak'd with the Malignity, which they thus suppress. But by Confession and Self-Accusation they discharge themselves of their Burden, and digest (as it were) the Crudity which was so oppressive. Only here it will be fit to advise them, that they be careful in chusing a fit Person, to whom they may open their Minds with Profit and Advantage; that they try to find out such a spiritual Physician, as knows how to mourn with them that mourn, to be weak with them who are weak; in fine, to be tender and compassionate, and such an one (upon the whole) as having approv'd his Skill to them, may give them Reason to depend upon his Council, and to follow it; that so, if he shall judge their Case to be, what may need the Cure of a publick Animadversion, and deserve to be laid open in the Face of the Church, for the Edification either of themselves or others, this may be done deliberately and discreetly, and agreeably to the Directions of such an approv'd Physician.

Tertullian sets himself to debate the Point with such as thro' a false Modesty endeavour'd to conceal their Crimes; and satyrizes (after this Manner) upon those who could be so foolish

as

trinfecus urgentur, & prope modum suffocantur, a Phlegmate vel Humore peccati. Si autem ipse sui Accusator fiat dum accusat semet ipsum ac confitetur, simul evomit & delictum, atq; omnem morbi digerit causam. Tantummodo circumspice diligentius cui debeas confiteri peccatum tuum, proba prius Medicum cui debeas causam languoris exponere; qui sciat infirmari cum infirmante, flere cum flente, qui condolendi & compatiendi noverit Disciplinam; ut ita deum si quid ille dixerit, qui se prius & eruditum Medicum ostenderit & misericordem, si quid consilii dederit, facias & sequaris; si intellexerit & praeviderit talem esse languorem tuum qui in conventu totius Ecclesiae exponi debeat & curari, ex quo fortassis & cæteri ædificari poterunt, & tu ipse facile sanari, multa hoc deliberatione, & satis perito medici illius consilio procurandum est. *ibid. in Origen.*

as to propound (b) concealing their Sins from God, because it was in their Power to conceal them from Man. He recommends Penitence even for Sins which as yet lurk'd only in the Will, and were never ripen'd into Action, throughout the whole 3d and 4th Chapters of his Book upon this Subject. Now it must be observ'd, that wherever the Ancients speak of *solemn Repentance*, they generally mean both the *outward Ordinance* and the *inward Duty*; for they had indeed no Notion of their being asunder: So that whether they express'd it by *Pœnitentia*, *Exomologesis*, Μετάνοια, or by any other Term, they mean by it both what passes within the Soul, and what appears in the external Form of penitential Mortification; nor do they distinguish in Words the one from the other, where yet the Sense must sometimes be understood of the one, and sometimes of the other. For Instance, where *Tertullian* speaks of the Austerities and Rigors attendant upon this Discipline, he must be constru'd to mean them of the *outward Ordinance*; and where he says in general, that God hath promis'd his Pardon to Penitence, (the Word he uses is still the same in both Cases) there he must be interpreted of the Duty at large, with all its Appendages, respecting both the *outward* and *inward Man*. But to proceed with the Case of voluntary Confession.

“(i)

(h) Grande plane Emolumentum verecundiæ occultatio delicti pollicetur! Videlicet si quid humanæ notitiæ subduxerimus, proinde & Deum celabimus. *Tertull. de Pœnitentiâ, cap. 10. and ibid. in cap. 4.*

Omnibus ergo delictis, seu carne, seu spiritu, seu factis, seu voluntate commissis, qui poenam per judicium destinavit, idem & veniam per poenitentiam spondit.

“(i) St. Cyprian commends the Practice, even “where there was no direct Offence in Fact, “but only a *Purpose* of it, (as *Tertullian* had done “before him concerning such Faults as had on- “ly tainted the Will) he imputes it to a Live- “liness and Vigor of Faith, and to an extraor- “dinary Degree of the Fear of God.”

Whether this was, in its Original, a Practice entirely voluntary, and owing to the extraordinary Heights of primitive Zeal, which it is not absolutely necessary for us to transcribe into our modern Discipline, shall be left to the Reader's Judgment, when he shall have receiv'd a just State of the Evidence on both Sides of the Question.

On one Hand, *Chrysostom* and *Austin* speak of it in Terms far enough from implying the least Necessity. The latter thus expresses his Sentiments upon the Subject, (k) *What have I to do with Men, that they should bear my Confessions, as if they were to ease me of my Distress, and to rid me of my Grievs?*

As to *Chrysostom*, his Words are these, (l) *I do not desire to expose you upon the publick Stage, before*

(i) Denique quanto & fide majores, & timore meliores sunt, qui quamvis nullo sacrificii aut libelli facinore conficti, quoniam tamen de hoc vel cogitaverunt, hoc ipsum apud sacerdotes Dei dolenter & simpliciter confitentes, Exomologesin conscientiae faciunt, animi sui pondus exponunt, salutarem medelam parvis licet & modicis vulneribus exquirunt, scientes scriptum esse, Deus non deridetur. *Cyprian. de Lapsis.*

(k) Quid mihi ergo est cum hominibus, ut audiant confessiones meas, quasi ipsi sanaturi sint omnes languores meos? *Augustin. in Confession. lib. 10. cap. 3.*

(l) Ἐδὲ γὰρ εἰς θεαλόν σε ἄγω ἥς συνδύλων ἥς ὧν, ἔδὲ ἐκ-
καλύψαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀναγκάζω τὰ αἰμασίηματα· τὸ συνέ-
δος ἀνάπυστον ἔμπροσθεν τῆς θεᾶς, καὶ αὐτὴς δεῖξον τὰ τραύματα,
καὶ παρ' αὐτῆς τὰ φάρμακα αἵτησον. *Chrysost. de Incompre-*
hensibil. Dei Naturâ, Hom. 5.

fore your Fellow-Servants; nor do I compel you to discover your Sins in the Presence of Men; but to unfold your Conscience to God, to show him your Ail and Malady, and to seek Relief from him.

That these Passages cannot be understood of the publick Exomologesis attending upon solemn Penance, will appear in the Sequel out of these very Authors, who mention and recommend that Practice; which will show that it had then a Continuance, and that with their Approbation.

But then it must be agreed, that these Passages do prove the *Confession* of *secret Sins* to have been (in the Opinion of these Fathers) a Practice not always necessary. *Chrysostom* was the immediate Successor of *Nectarius* in the See of *Constantinople*, who had just before abolish'd the (m) Penitentiary's Office. Now, it was the Business of that Officer to hear the *Confession* of *secret Sins*, and to prepare the Party who had been guilty of them for a decent Performance of publick Penance, (if that were judg'd necessary) and in order to it, he directed what should be acknowledg'd in the Face of the Congregation; and what was unfit to be there reveal'd, he advis'd should be kept in Silence.

If such an Office, or such a Practice, had then been judg'd in all Cases necessary, it may seem pretty hard to suppose, that *Nectarius* should nowhere be censur'd for daring to abolish them: And therefore it appears to have been at least the Opinion of that Person in particular, and indeed of that Age, (which made upon it no Remonstrances) that this was an Usage in its own Nature discretionary, which might either be retain'd

E

tain'd

(m) See an Account of this in the Appendix, No. 2, 3.

tain'd or discontinu'd, as it should or should not be judg'd subservient to the *Use of Edifying*. Accordingly when a notorious Inconvenience ensu'd upon it, we find it abolish'd, without any Reserve, Complaint, or Scruple.

That which may seem to argue it an (uncommanded) Effect of primitive Zeal, is the known Ardor of those earlier Ages, which often transported the Professors of our Faith into an Acknowledgment of it, when they had indeed no proper Call to make it. The publick Humiliation of scandalous Offenders was doubtless observ'd to carry with it very great Advantages; and this might induce considerable Numbers to rank themselves in the Class of *publick Penitents*, even for their *secret Sins*. Now as in the Case of *publick Penance* for *publick Sins*, there was a solemn humble Confession of the Faults it was impos'd for, in the Face of the Congregation, (that what had been *publickly* committed in the Face of the World, might be *publickly* retracted, and thereby the Scandal be remov'd) so in the Case of *secret Sins*, it is not improbable, that Occasion might hence be taken of thus acknowledging them in *publick*. When this was done indiscriminately, it is easy to conceive what Inconveniences might arise from it. A Penitentiary was therefore appointed, to whom these Persons should resort, and consult with him before-hand, what on the one Hand might be fit for Publication, and what on the other would be better reserv'd in Silence. And this for a good while was found a Cure of all Inconveniences; and so the Practice went forwards, 'till *Nicetas* thought fit to abrogate it.

(n).

(n) *Socrates* tells us, that the Addition of this Officer to the Ecclesiastical Roll, was not made till after the Decian Persecution; whereas *Sozomen* says, That the Bishops from the very Beginning agreed to appoint him. But both seem to have taken this Matter upon Trust, and to have been destitute of clear Authorities.

The Light of History will not therefore so fully determine this Matter for us, as to leave no Room for Doubt in it. It hath carry'd up the Original of the Practice very near, as we have seen, to the Fountain; but thereabouts it runs under Ground; and therefore many do here think themselves at Liberty to supply the Loss of it by probable Conjecture.

On the other Hand, it is judged, that the Opinions of *Chrysostom* and *Austin*, (who were very warm, and therefore not very accurate nor consistent Writers) are not to weigh against cooler and elder, and more numerous Authors, who speak of this Practice as in current Use, and never tell us when it had a Beginning. *Origen*, who liv'd in the second Century as well as in the third, speaks of it as the receiv'd Usage in his Time; he does not labour the Proof of it, as of a Thing disputed, but mentions it as a general and well known Practice, and only advises the Choice of a (o) fit Person to be entrusted with it. In his Time it should therefore seem, that the Penitentiary was not yet appointed, because upon the Institution of that Officer, the Liberty of chusing every Man his

E 2

own

(n) See both in the Appendix, No. 2, 3.

(o) *Circumspice diligentius — & proba prius medicum cui debeat causam languoris exponere. Vid. in pag. 45, 46.*

own Confessor, was determin'd, and restrain'd to the Person whom Authority had fix'd upon.

It is true indeed, that all who mention the Confession of *secret* Sins, do it still with some Eye of Reference to (p) *publick* Discipline. (This *Origen*, *Tertullian*, and *St. Cyprian* do all, as far as I can judge, agree in :) But then it is likewise certain, that *publick* Discipline was not assign'd to every Sin, which was thus in *private* confess'd; but only to such as, upon a View of the Case, were conceiv'd to need it. The Party therefore who thus confess'd his *private* Offences, must have open'd them at large, or else the Penitentiary could not judge of them whether they needed such a Cure or no. If they did not, then the Party had the Comfort of that Presbyter's Opinion, that he might be safe without it, and *Ghostly Advice* moreover, how to behave in the Conduct of his future Life; and upon this, in Process of Time, was grafted the Practice of *private* Penance. when the Zeal of Men grew too cold for a Submission to the *Publick*.

Since then it is evident, that *private* Confession was in certain Cases so early us'd and commend'd; since the Original of the Practice cannot be fix'd upon; since it seems to have some Foundation in (q) both *Testaments*, and in the Practice of the *Jews* upon the one, and of the first Christians upon the other; many do think, that they hence have Reason to conclude it an Institution design'd for the general Service of the Church in all Ages.

They

(p) Si intellexerit talem esse languorem tuum, qui in conventu totius Ecclesie exponi debeat & curari. *Origen. supra citat. in pag. 45, 46.*

(q) *Levit. 5. 5. Numbers 5. 7. Matt. 3. 6. James 5. 16.*

They find in Antiquity an Officer very early appointed for it; and before that Appointment; they observe moreover, that the Thing it self was in current Use; only the Parties themselves did then chuse the Person they resorted to for this Purpose. When he was nam'd by publick Authority, they read of the Qualifications expected from him; which, as *Sozomen* hath describ'd them, were, (r) *That he should be a Man of distinguished Character for Vertue, Prudence, and Taciturnity.* They find not only the Fact deriv'd to them from ancient Testimony, but the Approbation of it too from the same Hands, it having been a constant (s) Rule in proportioning the Discipline of Penance, to extend or contract the Time of it, as the Party should either be convict by Witnesses, or should come in of his own Accord to the Discovery of his Crime.

These however do not, I presume, design extending the Necessity of *private Confession* to the *Roman* Lengths, of *every mortal Sin*, in all its minutest Circumstances; they do not stile it (as the *Romanists* do) *Sacramental*; nor as such assert it to be a general Condition of God's Favour.

But wherever the Conscience is oppress'd with heavy Guilt, and knows not how otherwise to disburden; wherever there is a Want of *Comfort* or *Counsel*, of *solemn Intercession* for *Pardon*, or of *Restoration to the Peace of the Church*, (which may be *ipso facto* forfeited, even where there hath been no such Thing as a judicial Cognisance)

E 3

there

(r) *πρῶτον δὲ τῶν ἀρχαίων πολιτευομένων, ἐχέμεν τὴν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐπὶ τῷ τῶν ἀρχαίων.* *Sozomen. lib. 7. cap. 17.*

(s) See Canonical Epistle of *Gregory Nyssen* in the Appendix No. 1.

there they apprehend the Ministry of the Priest to be of great Importance, and as such recommend an Application to it in the Way of *private Confession*.

They are, I presume, very ready to acknowledge, that in the primitive Records there appears no Instance of this Practice, but what had some Aspect upon, some Reference to, Canonical Discipline; and that no Instance appearing, is a strong Presumption that there was none; for that it was a Matter of Consequence enough to have been mention'd; and was likely to have been so, especially in *St. Cyprian*, or in the *Constitutions*, if the Thing had then been known, as entirely distinct from all Relation to the outward and *publick* Regimen of the Church.

But then, tho' there was indeed heretofore this Relation between *private Confession* and *publick Penance*, yet since the latter hath been to such a Degree discontinu'd; and since it is apparent that *private Confession* was then only attended with *publick Penance*, when the Nature of the Case was judg'd to require it, (and not otherwise) they are willing to *keep* what they can of the *ancient Practice*, if they cannot *entirely retrieve it*; and therefore to *retain* that *Part* of the *private Confession*, which in the primitive Church was not attended with *publick Discipline*, rather than to *lose* the *whole*; as hoping that the one may prove in Time introductory to the other; and expecting (mean while) very great Advantages from a *Pastoral Collation* between Priest and People.

This they find recommended in very ancient Records, and descending to them with the Advantage of truly primitive Examples; and therefore they are loth entirely to lose Sight of it;

it; especially since they observe both our (t) own and most of the Reform'd Churches, to have been Well-wishers to it, tho' they have left it indeed upon every Man's Conscience to resort (as he shall see Occasion) to his spiritual Guide, either for *Comfort* or *Counsel*: By which sober Temperament it should seem indeed their Design, neither *entirely to abrogate*, nor in all Cases to *obtrude it*.

I have now as faithfully and as nearly as I could, represented the Sense of those who contend on both Sides of the Question, together with the Arguments which conclude both for the one and for the other.

It is not here my Design to interpose with my own Opinion, otherwise than to recommend to each a mutual Forbearance, where it is so hard to fix in any peremptory Conclusion: Since it is on one Hand most certain, that the

E 4

Practice

(t) See Exhortation in our Office before Communion, *If there be any Man who cannot quiet his own Conscience, but requireth farther Comfort or Counsel, — Let him open his Grief, &c.*

See also *Harmon. Confess.* with what is cited in Chap. 3. Sect. 4. Note c, p, 9, r.

Hortantur nostri Ecclesiastæ ad confitendum peccata, & fructum ejus, quod quis apud virum christianum & prudentem, secreto sibi, consolationem, consilium, doctrinam, & exhortationem querat, ostendunt; præceptis urgent hominem. *Eccles. 4 Civitat. in cap. 20. de Confessione.*

De confessione peccatorum docent, quod absolutio privata in Ecclesiis retinenda sit. In *Augustan. Confess. Artic. 14. Art. 12. ibid. iterum in Confess. cap. de Confessione.*

Diligenter retinemus in Ecclesiis confessionem.

De confessione privatâ faciendâ pastoribus, adfirmamus ritum private absolutionis in Ecclesiis retinendum esse. *Saxon. Confess. in cap. de Pœnitent.*

De pœnitentia ibidem docent ut pœnitentes sacerdotem accedant, peccataq; sua Deo ipsi coram illo confiteantur. *Bohem. Confess. Artic. 5. de Pœnitent.*

Practice is very ancient, and makes near Approaches to the Fountain; as it looks very probable on the other, that the Practice which *anciently* obtain'd, had References and Aspects towards an Usage, which is *now* in a Manner extinguished, *viz. publick Penance.*

I have but one further Observation to make, before I disinish this Article of *private Confession*, which shall be upon the famous Case of *Nectarius*, and upon the Change he made in the Discipline of *Penance*, by abrogating the Office of *Penitentiary.*

Sixtus Senensis is of Opinion, that *Nectarius*, by this Act, did discontinue the Practice of *publick Confession*, wherein the chief Humiliation of Penitents consisted. But this, I suppose, he brought in as a Salvo for *Chrysoptom*, whom he was loth to have his Enemy, and who speaks in so many Places of the *private*, in Terms of Diminution. He would therefore fain have *Chrysoptom* understood in those Passages to mean the *publick Confession*, which he (u) [*Sixtus*] supposes to have been abrogated by the Constitution of *Nectarius.*

It

(u) Ego verò arbitror Chrysoptomum hoc dixisse non de secretâ confessione, quæ sacramentalis poenitentiae pars est; sed de confessione illâ Theatrâli & publicâ, quæ pars est publicæ poenitentiae, quam olim poenitentes pro enormibus flagitiis, ceu in Theatro, coram Episcopo, Presbyteris, & populi multitudine facere solebant. — Etiam temporibus suis confessio publica fuerat metu furentis populi abrogata à Nectario Constantinop. Episcopo, Prædecessore suo, ob matronam à Diacono sub confessionis prætextu in templo compressam. *Sixt. Senens. in Biblioth. Sanct. lib. 5. Annotat. 175.*

Vid. etiam *Sirmond. Histor. Penitent. public. cap. 8. in Opuscul. Tom. 3.* whose Opinion in this Point, is the same with that of *Sixtus.*

It would indeed have been somewhat inconvenient to have acknowledg'd, that *Cbrysoftom* was an Enemy to what is call'd the *Sacramental Confession*; and therefore he was at any Rate to be brought off from speaking of it disadvantageously.

However, we cannot forget, that the Penitentiary's Office was appointed for the Direction and Comfort of such as should resort to him, in order to unburden their Consciences of their *secret Sins*, for assigning to such their Measures of *publick Penance*, or else for assuring them that they did not need it; in short, for counselling the Publication of the Sins so confess'd to him, in the Face of the Church, (as was usual in the Case of notorious Crimes) or else for directing the Concealment of them within the Bosom of the Parties who had been guilty of them.

Indeed the Occasion of abolishing the Office, proves to us what Use was made of it. For when, by the imprudent Direction of one of those Penitentiaries, a Sin was *publickly confess'd*, which had been better conceal'd, the Inconvenience which ensu'd upon the Discovery, was the Cause why *Nectarius*, (who then was Bishop of *Constantinople*) abolished the whole Office. The Consequence of which must needs have been, that such as had none, at that Time, but *secret Sins*, none which gave *publick Scandal* to account for, were left entirely to themselves, and to the Guidance of their own Judgments, whether they should resort to, or abstain from the holy Communion; they were thenceforwards to be at their own Peril, and if they approach'd unworthily, they were to answer for it to God, and to their own Consciences:

Yet

Yet they were still, I presume, at Liberty to use the Advice of a Ghostly Counsellor, if they found themselves in want of it; only there was thenceforwards no peculiar Officer, whose distinct Business it should be to receive such Applications; which brings the Case pretty near to that of our own Establishment, in the Particular now before us.

However, from that Time Confession of *secret* Sins to God only, became the avow'd Practice of the *Greek Church*. For this Discontinuance of the Penitentiary's Office, tho' begun at *Constantinople*, did yet soon spread it self over all the Churches of the *East*. It was therefore no Wonder, that *Chrysostom*, who sat next after *Nectarius* in that See, should speak so coldly and indifferently of a Practice which had then very lately given the Occasion of such great Disturbance.

But he himself will furnish us with abundant Evidence, that the *publick Exomologesis*, or the *solemn Humiliation* of Penitents in the Face of the Church, was the same in his Days, that it was before them. For

(v) He complains in a Letter to Pope *Innocent*, "That *Theophilus* had irregularly absolv'd those who had been laid by him under publick Censure."

(w) He threatens such as should hire Mourners for Funerals, "That he would throw them into the same Rank of Penance, which was assign'd

(v) τοὺς παρ' ἡμῶν γενομένους ἀκοινωνήτας ἔλυσε. Chrysost. in Epist. ad Innocent.

(w) πολλὸν αὐτὸν χεῖρον ἢ ἐκκλησίας ἀπείρομψ, οἷς Ἐδωλολάτριν. — Μηδεὶς καταφρονεῖτω τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς δεσμῶν.

" assign'd to Idolaters, as disparaging the Hope
 " of a Resurrection. " And again " bespeaks his
 " People not to despise the Censures of the
 " Church, inasmuch as God would be sure to
 " confirm them, who had given such Power to
 " Men. "

" Finally, (*) he commends the receiv'd Forms
 " of publick Humiliation, (tho' he prefers in-
 " deed the Compunction of the Heart before them
 " in the Comparison) and plainly shows, that
 " they were the same as formerly, viz. on the
 " Penitent's Part; Prostration, and Departure
 " from the Church, when such a Part of the
 " Service was over; as on the Part of the chief
 " Minister and People, Intercessions for him, and
 " Prostrations with him. "

The publick Discipline stood therefore the same
 after the Days of Nectarius, which it did before
 them; only the Confession of secret Sins, which
 gave no Scandal, was left thenceforwards to the
 Discretion and Conscience of those who had
 committed them.

When that Practice was in its Height with
 the Eastern Churches, and bore the Relation
 which

δεσμῶν· ὃ γὰρ ἀνθρώπος ἐστὶν ὁ δεσμῶν, ἀλλὰ ὁ Χρῆστος, ὁ καὶ
 ἔξουσίαν ταυτίῳ ἡμῶν δεδοκώς καὶ κυρίως ποιῶν ἀνθρώπου τὴν
 ὑποταγῆς τιμὴν. *ibid.* in Epist. ad Ebræ. Homil. 4.

(*) καλὸν μὲν καὶ τὸ ποῦ ὁ πορτοῦ εἶναι νῦν, νεκρῶν, καὶ Χερουβίμ,
 καὶ σκοπὸς — ὡς τῶν ἐν μελανίᾳ κοιναὶ καὶ πᾶσι τῷ ἱερῶν,
 καὶ παρ' αὐτῶν [viz. Fidelium] γίνονται ἔνχαϊ. — Πά-
 λιν ἐπειδὴν εἰσέρομεν τῶν ἱερῶν περιβάλλοντος τοῦ ἐδυναμῆς τὴν
 δεσφῶς μελαγχρῶν τραπέζης, ἐτάσαν δὲ γενεᾷ ἐκχύν, καὶ πάν-
 τες ὁμοίως ἐπ' ἐδάφους κείμεθα, καὶ πάντες ὁμοίως ἀντιστήμεθα.
ibid. in Epist. 2. ad Corinth. Hom. 4 & 18.

Ἀκούετε ἐξ ὧν τὸ κήρυκον καὶ λέγοντες, ὅσοι ἐν μελανίᾳ ἀπὸ πλ-
 ηέρων. *ibid.* in Epist. ad Ephes. Hom. 3.

which hath been observ'd to *publick* Discipline, they who had this *publick Penance* assign'd them for Sins committed in *private*, did not always make a *publick* Declaration of the Fact, for which they appear'd in the Rank of Penitents. Somewhat the Congregation knew had been committed, which deserv'd Correction; but *what* in particular, they were no otherwise acquainted with, than as the Penitentiary should advise or forbid the Discovery. And his Indiscretion in giving here an improper Direction, was the Cause why his Office was abolish'd by *Nectarius*.

(y) *They whom you see (says Austin) in a State of Penance, have committed some heinous Crime or other, such as Adultery, or the like Enormity, for which they are put under it. If it were not of an enormous Nature, the daily Sacrifice of Prayer would suffice to atone for it.*

Hence therefore it appears, that People were then in a State of *publick Discipline*, for Crimes which the *Publick* was not in particular inform'd of. And this Usage continu'd much longer in the *West*, than it did in the *East*.

Thus much shall suffice to have been observ'd upon *Confession*, as previous to, and distinct from *Segregation*; which was the second *constituent Part* of the Discipline we are now describing.

SECT.

(y) Illi enim quos videtis agere poenitentiam, scelera commiserunt, aut adulteria, aut aliqua facta immania, unde agunt poenitentiam. Nam si levia peccata ipsorum essent, hæc quotidiana oratio delendo sufficeret. *Augustin. in Symbol. ad Catechumen. lib. 1. cap. 6.*

S E C T. II. Of Segregation.

The two famous Periods respecting this Discipline, were, that which preceded the Heresy of *Montanus* and *Novatus*, (especially of the latter) and that which follow'd it. Before those Men appear'd to disturb the Church with their importunate Clamours, the Discipline of *Penance* was either *it self* less regular, or at least our *Accounts* of it are less circumstantial, than they have been since. It is natural and easy to conceive, that in the Infancy of Church-Government, whilst Christians were under Persecution, and had consequently less and fewer Opportunities of acting with Concert in their respective Church-Offices; that Things, I say, might then be carry'd more *discretionally* than they were afterwards; that they might then go less upon Rule and Precedent, and might judge, *pro re nata*, upon such Emergencies as were brought before them.

And indeed the whole of this Discipline was in divers Respects milder *before* that Period, than it was *after* it, when Objections came to be started upon the Neglect of Church-Governors, and upon their promiscuous Admission of *all* to Communion, (after *publick Penance*) as well those who had been *notorious Sinners*, as those who had always been without Spot or Blemish.

Neither *Montanus* nor *Novatus* did in gross, and in general deny the *Mercies of God*, or the Peace of the Church, to *every Offender*. The *Mercies of God in his final Judgment*, they did no Way meddle with in any Case whatsoever: But the *Peace of the Church* was what they would have had refus'd to the three great Sins, which will
fall

fall under our Cognisance in the first Section of the second Part of this Chapter; and the *Admission* of such to *Communion*, as had been guilty of them, was the *Ground* of their Quarrel with, and Separation from, the Church.

We read in *Tertullian* (when gone over to the *Montanists*) of a Distinction between Sins, (z) which were some of them *remissible*, and others *irremissible*. According to which Distinction, some would be admitted to Pardon upon a light Correction, whilst others would stand obnoxious to a greater Damnation.

But even those which he judg'd *irremissible* by the Church, and therefore would have had condemn'd to *perpetual Penance*, without Hope of *Absolution*, might however receive (in his Opinion) some Benefit from that Discipline, though *here* no Pardon. The Man who had committed such Sins, as expos'd him to this heavy Punishment, might find his Account *hereafter*, tho' *here* he found none in his Submission to it. (a) For tho' he did not reap from Man, (as *Tertullian* hath observ'd) yet he sow'd to God, and there would be sure not to lose his Labour. The same Author would have an (b) *Adulterers do Penance*, (that was what he

(z) Delicta — alia erunt remissibilia, alia irremissibilia. Secundum quod nemini dubium est, alia castigationem mereri, alia damnationem. Omne delictum aut venia expungit, aut poena; venia ex castigatione, poena ex damnatione. *Tertull. de Pudicitia, cap. 2.*

(a) Et si pacem hic non metit, apud Dominum seminat; nec amittit, sed preparat fructum; non vacabit ab Emolumento, si non vacaverit ab Officio. Ita nec Poenitentia huiusmodi vana, nec Disciplina ejusmodi dura est. *ibid. Tertull. in cap. 3.*

(b) Sane agat poenitentiam (sc. Moecha) non tamen ad restitutionem consecutura. — Hæc enim erit poenitentia, quam & nos debere quidem agnoscimus, multo magis, sed de venia Deo reservamus. *ibid. in cap. 19.*

he as much as any would have inculcated) *tho' as to Pardon, he was for reserving it to God.*

Ambrose hath laid down the same Distinction, and given the same Account of the *Novatians* Practice, which *Tertullian*, before him, had given of the *Montanists*. (c) *They are content* (says he of the *Novatians*) *to pardon the lighter Faults, but except the more heinous ones from the Benefit of Absolution.*

Concurrent with *his*, is *Pacian's* Account of the *Novatian* Error, (d) *as denying to the Church any Power of forgiving a mortal Sin; and even affirming, that she herself would be lost, by the Reception of such as had committed it.*

So that the Question between the Orthodox and those Hereticks in this Point; was not whether God would or would not pardon such and such Sins, but whether the Church might admit to her Communion the Persons who had been guilty of them; whether *Absolution* should be ever granted to them after the most laborious *Penance*. They agreed with the Church, that *Penance* should be undergone by those Persons; but they deny'd them the *Fruit* of it, and never granted Restoration.

They did neither of them enough consider (what *Ambrose* well reply'd to them) (e) *That the Power of Loosing was granted as unconditionally, as that of Binding;*

(c) Exceptis gravioribus criminibus relaxare veniam levioribus. *Ambros. de Penitentia, lib. x. cap. 2.*

(d) Mortale peccatum Ecclesia donare non possit; imò quod ipsa peccat recipiendo peccatores. *Pacian. in Epist. 3. ad Sempronian.*

(e) Dominus par jus & solvendi esse voluit, & ligandi, qui utrumq; pari conditione permisit: Ergo qui solvendi jus non habet, nec ligandi habet. Sicut enim juxta Dominicam Sententiam.

Binding; and that they who had not the one, must be without the other.

Tertullian might have found an Answer from himself, who in his Book of *Penitence*, tells his Reader, (f) *That God when he shut the Door of Baptismal Pardon, (which could never be repeated) had yet open'd another, by the Discipline of Penance; which he would never have threaten'd any for not submitting to, if he had not design'd their Pardon upon their Submission.*

But however the Reason or Authority of the Case might stand, the Event was, that the pretended Sanctity of these two Sects, and their extreme Severity towards Delinquents, wrought up the Discipline of the Church to an higher Pitch, and extended her Censures to a longer Continuance, after that Question came to be debated.

Before that Controversy was started, Months or Weeks sufficed, where afterwards Years would not satisfy. The Stations of Penance do not appear to have been so many, nor the Time of Continuance in each so long. The whole was more in the Power of the Bishops, who acted herein discretionally, 'till Rules were gradually form'd upon Precedents, and Councils confirm'd those Rules afterwards by express Authority.

It is generally suppos'd, that St. Paul's second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, was written in the same Year with his first. Now his second pardons

sententiam qui ligandi jus habet, & solvendi habet; ita istorum assertio seipsam strangulat, ut quia solvendi sibi jus negant, negare debeant & ligandi. *Ambros. in loc. supra citat.*

(f) Deus clausâ licet ignoscentiæ Januâ, & intinctionis serâ obstructâ, aliquid adhuc permittit patere. Collocavit in vestibulo pœnitentiam secundam, quæ pulsantibus patefaciat. — Non comminaretur autem non pœnitenti; si non ignosceret pœnitenti. *Tertullian. de Penitent. cap. 7 & 8.*

done a very heinous Sinner, and relaxes the Discipline under which the first had put him; so that the *incestuous Corinthian* did not continue quite a Year under Censure: Whereas to satisfy (as it should seem) the *Novatian* Clamours, such a Crime would afterwards have stood the Delinquent in many Years Penance. The Church was willing to convince her Enemies, that she did not intend by her Mildness to encourage Sin; that she did not willingly nor easily admit to her Communion such as *walked disorderly*; and therefore if (g) the extraordinary Contrition of the Penitent did not mollify the Execution of his Sentence, he was to continue in some Cases for 3, in some for 9, and in others again for 27 Years in a State of Segregation.

Upon the whole, it far'd with this Case of *Discipline*, as it did with some Points of *Doctrine*. The Disputes which were rais'd about it, caus'd Men to speak afterwards more *accurately* of it, to draw it out into Scheme and Circumstance, and to give a fuller and more punctual Account of it, than we might otherwise have met with.

From hence then we learn, that when Sins had been committed, which were thought to deserve an Ecclesiastical Censure, (whether Notoriety of Fact, or the Party's own Confession, or another's Accusation, had reveal'd them) the Consequence was a Separation of the Delinquent from the rest of the Assembly in publick Worship. He had a peculiar *Station* assign'd him, and was to leave the Congregation, (b) when

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(g) See *Gregory Nyssen's* Canonical Epistle in the Appendix No. 1. together with what is written upon the Original of *Redemptions*, in Chap. 3. Sect. 2.

(h) See an Account of the publick Worship in the primitive Church in Appen. No. 1. *Greg. Nyssen's* Epist. Note upon it 4.

the Hymns, and Lessons, and Lectures, and the Prayers for the Catechumens, were dispatch'd: But before he departed, a solemn (i) Prayer was put up to God for *him*, and for *all* in his Circumstance and Station, and there was more-over an *Imposition of the chief Minister's Hands* upon him.

This indeed, and this alone, seems to have been *originally* the proper Station of Penitents, (which was call'd *Prostration*.) They were consider'd as such when they came within this Class, and the Church unquestionably *then* took Notice of them, as of a People under its Care.

Heathens themselves might stand without the Church-Door, or just within it, if they pleas'd, as *Hearers*, whenever Curiosity, or any other Reason, brought them to hear the Hymns sung, or the Scriptures read, or the Sermons preach'd by the Bishop, or any of his Presbyters. For so the fourth Council of *Carthage* directs the Bishop, That (k) *he should binder none from entring into the Church, (who had a Mind to it) nor from continuing in it, 'till the Service for the Catechumens began.*

Now *Excommunicates* were, I presume, in this Respect, upon the same Foot with *Heathens*, and *both alike* might enter the Church *thus far*, whilst *both* were *alike* consider'd. But when the Party excommunicated was soften'd into Submission, he was longer then in *recovering* the Privileges he had forfeited, than he was at first in *gaining* them; nor

(i) See the Form of this in Append. No. 4. and see more-over what is written and cited in pag. 89, 90, 91, Notes 7, 8, 9.

(k) Ut Episcopus nullum prohibeat ingredi Ecclesiam, & audire verbum Dei, sive Gentilem, sive Hæreticum, sive Judæum usq; ad missam Catechumenorum. In *Concil. Carthag.* 4. *Habir. A. D. 398. Can. 84.*

nor could he be *re-admitted* to Communion upon Terms so easy, as those upon which he was first *admitted* to it. And therefore the *Penitent* pass'd thro' more Stages, and was longer detain'd from Communion, than the *Catechumens*. As he had contracted more Guilt, by abusing his Knowledge of the Gospel, he was oblig'd to submit to a longer Separation, and to pass thro' more Degrees of it, than even an *Heathen* himself; and therefore whilst the *one* was allow'd to enter the Church as an *Hearer*, the *other* was, for some Time, detain'd at the Church-Door, and was not admitted to proceed beyond it.

The Apostolick Constitutions (which seem to have been a mix'd interpolated Work, and not to have been known in any Form 'till the 4th Century, will however) give us a good deal of Light into the old Formalities of assigning Penance : For it is to be observ'd, that tho' they mention *some* more *modern* Practices, (which may be owing perhaps to later Interpolations) yet they do likewise delineate to us *others* more *ancient*; which the Author of that Work, when he set himself to compile it, did probably find to have been, for some Time before him, in current Use.

What I am going to translate from them, is undoubtedly of a very *ancient* Date, and I believe much elder than the Edition of that Work; and it appears to be so, from the Shortness of the Time it hath directed for the Party's Continuance under the *penitential Discipline*, since (as I have already suggested) the Time of Penance was much prolong'd after *Montanus*, and grew still more severe after that *Novatus* had broach'd his Heresy.

The Passage I am transcribing, is directed to the Bishop, and runs thus: (1) *When you see the Offender in the Congregation, you are to take the Matter heavily, and to give Orders that he be expelled from it. Upon his Expulsion, the Deacons are likewise to express their Concern, to follow and to find the Party, and to detain him for a while without the Church. In a little Time they are to come back, and to intercede with you on his Behalf, in like Manner as our Saviour interceded with his Father for Sinners, (saying, as we learn in the Gospel Luke 23. 34. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.) Then you shall order him to be brought into the Church; and after having examin'd whether he be truly penitent, and fit to be re-admitted into full Communion, you shall direct him to continue in a State of Mortification for the Space of two, three, five, or seven Weeks, according to the Nature of the Offence; and then after some proper Admonitions, shall dismiss [or absolve] him.*

It is doubted amongst learned Men, whether the Stations of Penance were so distinguish'd before the Times of Montanus and Novatus, as they were

(1) Ἰδὼν δὲ σὺ τὴν ἡμαρτηκότα, πικρὰν θείας κελεύσει αὐτὸν ἔξω βλεψήναι, καὶ θελόντι αὐτῷ παρηγοῦναι, οἱ διάκονοι, καὶ ὁπισθὲν καλεσάμενοι αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ εἰσελθόντες ὑπὸ αὐτῷ σε ἐρωτάτω. καὶ ὅταν ἴδῃ ἡμαρτηκὸς τὸ σωτῆρος τὸ παλιν εἶναι, ὡς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, Πάτερ ἄφες αὐτοῖς, καὶ ὅταν οἴδῃσι ὁ ποιῶν: τότε σὺ κελεύσεις εἰσελθεῖν αὐτὸν, καὶ ἀνακρίνας εἰ μετάνοιαν, καὶ ἄξιός ἐστιν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ὅπως ἀδεχθῆναι, σιωπᾶσαι αὐτὸν ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ καὶ τὸ αἵματιον, ἑβδομάδας δύο ἢ πλεον, ἢ ὅσον, ἢ ἑπτά, ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀπολύσει, εἰπὼν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἀρμύζει ἡμαρτηκότης εἰς μετάνοιαν. In Apostol. Constitut. lib. 2. cap. 16. See moreover what is cited from them in pag. 42, 43. Note d.

were after them. If they *were* so, the Account of that Matter comes down to us so *lamely*, that we cannot be sure of it.

For tho' such as desir'd to return into the Church by the Door of *Penance*, might stand before their Times at the Church-Porch, intreating with *Tears* to be admitted further, yet that *Station* does not *then* appear to have been formally assign'd them, as a Part of their penitential Labours. So likewise for the *Station* of *Hearers*, they might indeed stand in that Part of the Church before they were admitted into the Roll of *Penitents*, as *Jews* and Infidels, we have seen, were allow'd to stand there; but from the Moment wherein they were receiv'd as *Penitents*, and enter'd as such into the Care of the Church, there are Men of great Name and Learning, who believe them to have been placed amongst the *Prostrate*; which grew in After-times to be esteem'd the third *Station* of *Penance*, those of *Mourners* and *Hearers* being the two preceding.

Whether the Uncertainty we are at in this Matter, proceeds from Want of *Light*, or of *Faith*, I shall not determine. But indeed the growing Corruption and License of Practice, which the Conversion of the Emperors brought into the Church, gave afterwards an Occasion to this Discipline of being more frequently us'd, and *then* of being (in Course) more exactly describ'd to us, than it was whilst our Religion lay under publick Discouragements. For *then* it was not so likely, that any should *profess* Christianity, who did not *mean* it; nor may we therefore expect, that the Traces of this Discipline should be so conspicuous *then*, as when it grew to be in more frequent Use. The Case of those,

who thro' Fear forsook our Religion, was that which chiefly employ'd the Discipline of the three first Centuries; so that its several Parts and Proportions, with divers Circumstances, which Time and Occasions brought on the Mention of, must necessarily have been left untouch'd by these earlier Writers.

However it be, the Assignment of Penitents for so many Years to the Station of *Mourners*, for so many to *that* of *Hearers*, for so many more to *that* of the *Prostrate*; and further yet, for so many to that of *By-Standers*, (this) was all the undoubted Language of the fourth Century; and many hence (as finding no earlier Footsteps of it, which could with Certainty be distinguish'd) have concluded it the Product of that Age.

Yet what will be cited from (m) *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, and hath already been quoted from *Tertullian*, looks (it must be own'd) somewhat like a Distinction of *penitential Stations*, even in the third Century. The one hath expressly mention'd the Station of *Hearers*, in a Manner which seems to imply, that he was no Stranger to *that* of the *Mourners*; since People who were to be driven from the Station of *Hearers*, were in all Likelihood driven to *that* of *Mourners*, as the next in Rank and Order to the former. In which Respect, they were a little worse treated than *Jews* or Heathens, who might all, (we have seen) if they pleas'd be, *Hearers*.

The other (*viz. Tertullian*) seems to have had in View some Distinction between such as were deny'd a *Communion in Prayer* with the *Faithful*, and

(m) See *Tertullian* cited in pag. 36. Si quis ita deliquerit, ut à communicatione, orationis & conveniùs, & omnis sancti commercii relegatur. And *Gregory Thaumaturgus* in Part 2. Sect. 1. of this Chapter, Note g, ἀνεχώρησας ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ.

and such as were further banish'd from all *sacred Commerce*. But since this is not quite so clear as the former Case, I do not build upon it.

I am apt however to suspect, that the Practice might be about this Time in its *Birth*, inasmuch as we find it so soon after *grown up* to its full Proportions.

Yet I suppose it grew not up in all Places alike, nor proceeded every where by the same Steps. It is pretty plain, and shall in its proper Place be observ'd accordingly, that (n) *Gregory Nyssen* did not prescribe the *Station* of the *Consistentia*, or *By-Standers*, altho' his Brother *Basil* hath expressly recorded it. In like Manner it is not improbable, that the other *Stations* preceding that of the *Prostrate*, were variously us'd in various Places, and had different Beginnings in different Countries. If the last Canon in the Epistle of *Gregory Thaumaturgus* were unquestionably his, it would put this Matter out of all Dispute, with Regard to his Age and Contry, since the *Stations* there are all of them mention'd in their proper Order. But as this is now generally thought to have been borrow'd from *Basil*, it will prove nothing before *his* Time.

Basil himself, who liv'd in the Middle of the fourth Century, hath lineally describ'd to us all the *Stations* of *Penance*, which by that Time were got into full and current Use; since he doth not recite them as novel Practices, but as the established Rules of the (then) prevailing Discipline.

(n) See his Canonical Epistle in the Appendix, No. 1. Note g.

The Case he mentions was (o) " of such as
 " offended by Incontinence, who for the first
 " Year were to be excluded entirely from the
 " whole Service, and to stand weeping at the
 " Church-Door, which was the Station of *Mourn-*
 " *ers* ; in the Year following they were admit-
 " ted to *that* of *Hearers* ; in the third to *that* of
 " the *Prostrate*, call'd (as the Learned Reader
 " may observe) by Way of Eminence, *The Pe-*
 " *nance* ; in the fourth they were permitted to
 " stand with the *Faithful*, whilst they *communi-*
 " *cated*, but might not themselves *partake* with
 " them. And this I have termed the *Station* of
 " *Confistentes*, or *By-Standers* ; and thus at last
 " they were restor'd, in full, to all their Pri-
 " vileges, and were allow'd to communicate."

Upon these several *Stations* (as distinct from
 the great and eminent *Station* of *Penance*, that I
 mean of the *Prostrate*) I shall but just observe,
 that the *Station* of *Mourners*, was quite out of
Hearing, and was only intended to plant the
 Supplicant in a fit Posture for begging the In-
 tercessions and Prayers of such as were permit-
 ted to enter within the Church ; that the *Sta-*
tion of *Hearers* imply'd no farther Privilege, than
 that the Persons who stood in it, might join
 in the Hymns and Psalms, and might bear the
 Scriptures read and preach'd, (which the Wor-
 ship of those Times began with) and when this

Part

(o) ἔστι δὲ ἐν δ' ἔτεσιν ὡρισμένῃ τοῖς πορνέυσιν ἢ ὀπιτίμοις·
 Χρη δὲ πρὶς πρῶτῃ ἐκβαλλεῖς τῆς προσευχῶν, καὶ προσκλαίειν
 αὐτοὺς τῇ θύρᾳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας· πρὶς δ' αὐτῶν δεχθῆναι εἰς ἀκοή-
 ασιν· πρὶς τρίτῃ εἰς Μελάνριον· πρὶς τετάρτῃ εἰς ὕδασιν μετὰ
 τοῦ λαοῦ, ἀπεχωμένους τῆς προσφορᾶς· εἴτε αὐτοὺς ὀπιτρέπεῖς τῇ
 κοινωνίᾳ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ. Basil. in Epist. Canonic. ad Amphilo-
 chium Iconii Episcop. Can. 22.

Part of the *Service* was over, they were dismiss'd before that for the Catechumens began.

I have already suggested the Doubt which there hath been amongst learned Men, whether these were appointed *Stations of Penance* before the Times of *Montanus* or *Novatus*, or whether they were voluntarily chosen by such as desir'd to be admitted into the Class of *Penitents*, as Testimonies of their Humility and Sorrow, and of their Desire to atone for their past Misbehaviour.

But soon after the Time here mention'd, (*viz.* in the latter End of the third, or the Beginning of the fourth Century) it is very evident, that the Stations of *Fletus* and *Auditio*, of Mourning and Hearing, were consider'd as preparatory in Point of Form, to that of *Prostration*, and were assign'd as such to Penitents for a certain Time, who gradually advanc'd thro' one and another, 'till they were fully re-instat'd in all their Privileges.

Not that all these Stages were in every Case necessary to be pass'd thro'! No! but according to the Nature and Quality of the Sin, as it was more or less enormous, the Offender was directed to stand, from the very first, either amongst the *Mourners*, or *Hearers*, or to be amongst the *Prostrate*; or sometimes to skip all the three, and only to stand by the *Faithful*, whilst they communicated, without being (himself) allowed to join with them. This was the Station call'd *Census*, or *Consistentia*, which was next in order to that of full Communion. For as Discipline grew (after the Time of *Novatus*) to be more severe, it was thought improper, that Penitents should rush upon the holy Mysteries just after their *Prostration*; and therefore they were here detain'd for a while, before they were admitted

admitted to full Communion. Sometimes for lighter Offences, or else for the better Concealment of more heinous ones, which might have prov'd either capital to the Offender, or otherwise highly inconvenient, he was originally assign'd to this, and to no other Station. And this the Father last cited hath told us was the Usage, with Regard to Women (w) "whom either their own Piety brought to confess, or any other Information charg'd (before the Bishop) with the Sin of Adultery; that they were allotted to this Station, till the Time assign'd them for their penitential Separation, was expir'd."

The Relief they had hence, was, that they did not (*δημοσιδεῖν*) *publish* the Sins whereof they had been guilty; which the Exomologesis, usual with the *Prostrates*, would have obliged them to do; at least it would thence have been evident, that they had committed some very heinous Sin; and *that* would have brought them under a Suspicion, which in Time might have prov'd fatal.

Prostration however, both *before* and *after* the Time of *Novatus*, was all along regarded as the chief Station of *Penance*, wherein the Sin of the Delinquent was understood to be expiated. Accordingly we meet in the Writings of the Fathers, with frequent Mention of the Severities and Rigors, which were impos'd upon him. Whatever indeed we have of that Kind represented to us in ancient Authors, does usually refer

(w) τὰς μοιχαλθείσας γυναῖκας, καὶ ἑταροδόχους δι' ἀλγέβαιαν ἢ ὁποῦν ἐλεγχομένους, δημοσιδεῖν ἐκ ἐκείλων οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν, ἵνα μὴ θανάτῳ αἰτίαν ᾤοντο ἑλεγχθείσας. ἵσταται δὲ αὐτὰς ἀπὸ κοινωνίας προσέταξαν μέλοι τῷ συμπληροῦν τὸ χρόνον τῇ Μετανοίας. Basil. in Epist. Canonic. Can. 34.

fer to this, and to this Station only; because, as I have more than once already suggested, the rest were consider'd rather as *preparatory* to, than as *Parts of Penance*; which, tho' design'd as a *Punishment*, was in order to a *Privilege*, and as such was su'd for with great Importunity.

The Council of *Carthage* (so lately cited) directs the Minister of Penance (p) to *assign it to such, as humbly begged it without Respect of Persons*. They could not communicate, 'till they had pass'd thro' it; and that was the Reason why they so *humbly begged*, that they might be admitted to it. They did not apprehend themselves to be *fully in the Church*, 'till they might partake of its Ordinances; and it was then an undisputed Maxim, (q) *That no Man was a Christian, who was not in the Church: Let his teaching Abilities be what they would, his Eloquence and Philosophy never so great, yet if he broke the Bond of Charity and Ecclesiastical Unity, he was judg'd to have lost, whatever of Privilege he once might have claim'd as a Member of the Church; and when that was once lost, and he was duly ejected out of it, there was no Salvation to be expected for him.* So St. Cyprian.

And

(p) Ut sacerdos pœnitentiam imploranti absq; personæ acceptione, pœnitentiæ leges injungat. In 4 Concil. Carthag. Can. 74.

(q) Quod verò ad Novatiani personam pertinet, frater charissime — scias nos primo in loco nec curiosos esse debere, quid ille doceat, cum foris doceat. Quisquis ille est, & qualiscunq; est, Christianus non est, qui in Christi Ecclesiâ non est. Jactet se licet, & Philosophiam vel Eloquentiam suam superbis vocibus prædicet; qui nec fraternam charitatem, nec Ecclesiasticam unitatem retinuit, etiam quod prius fuerat, amisit. Cyprian. in Epist. 52. ad Antonian.

Neq; enim vivere foris possunt, cum domus Dei una sit, & nemini salus esse nisi in Ecclesiâ possit. *ibid.* in Epist. 62. ad Pomponium.

And yet this Discipline (how much soever the Zeal of those Times might induce People to desire coming under it) was in Reality very severe and rigorous; not only in the Church, and in the Time of Worship, their Behaviour and Posture were to manifest their Sorrow, but out of it likewise they were to express the same, in the whole Course and Tenor of Life and Conversation.

Origen will tell us, that the (r) *Hardships* were very great, which that Man must submit to, who should not be discourag'd by the Regards of Shame, from opening his Case to the Minister of God, and from seeking Relief at his Hands, that according to that of the Psalmist, he must water his Couch with his Tears, and that they must be his Meat both Day and Night.

Tertullian, where he would rather diminish, than magnify the Rigors of Church-Discipline, does yet bear Testimony to it; so that what comes here from him, is to be consider'd as coming from an unwilling Witness, who would rather have chosen to conceal, than to acknowledge it. Yet even he (whilst, as a *Montanist*, he ridicules it for insignificant) confesses it to be very rigorous. (s) *They sit* (says he, speaking of the Penitents) *in Sackcloth, they are cover'd with Ashes, they intreat with Sighs and Groans, and bend-ed Knees, their common Mother.* And again, *The Adul-*

(r) Est adhuc & septima, licet dura & laboriosa per poenitentiam remissio peccatorum, cum lavat peccator in lachrymis stratum suum, & fiunt ei lachrymæ suæ panes die ac nocte; & cum non erubescit sacerdoti Domini indicere peccatum suum. *Origen. in Levitic. cap. 3. Homil. 2.*

(s) De poenitentiae officio, Sedent in sacco, & cinere inhorrescunt, eodem statu gemiscunt, eisdem precibus ambiunt, eisdem genibus exorant, eandem invocant matrem. —

Et

Adulterer is brought into the Congregation, to supplicate the Brotherhood in Form of a Penitent, covered with Sackcloth and Ashes, under all imaginable Circumstances of Confusion and Disgrace, before the Widows and Presbyters of the Church, forcing Tears from every one, prostrate before their Feet, and thus beseeching their Compassion.

The same Author elsewhere acquaints us with the Hardships attending the publick Exomologesis, (the Confession and Humiliation of the prostrate Penitent.) (t) *It extends (he says) its Rigor even to his Garb and Diet, and to lay him in Sackcloth and Ashes; it obliges him to neglect all Dress and Ornament, to afflict his Soul with melancholy Meditations, and to reverse, by a quite contrary Practice, the Example of his former Misbehaviour. As to Meat and Drink, to use none for Pleasure, but merely for Sustenance; to keep up the Fervours of his Piety with frequent and assiduous Fastings; to groan and weep, and to cry unto the Lord his God both Night and Day; to prostrate himself before the Presbyters of the Church, and to beg of the Servants of God in the humblest Postures, that they would intercede for his Pardon.*

All

Et tu quidem pœnitentiam moechi ad exorandum fraternitatem in Ecclesiam inducis, conciliatum & concineratum, cum dedecore & horrore compositum prostratum in medium, ante viduas, ante Presbyteros, omnium lachrymas suadentem, omnium vestigia lambentem, omnium genua detinentem. *Tertull. de Pudicit. cap. 5, 13.*

(t) De ipso quoq; habitu atq; victu mandat: Sacco & cineri incubare, corpus fordibus obscurare, animum auctoribus deprecari, illa quæ peccavit tristi tractatione mutare; cæterum pastum & potum pura nosse, non ventris scilicet, sed animæ causâ; plerumq; verò jejunii preces alere, ingemiscere, lachrymari, & mugire dies noctesq; ad Dominum Deum; Presbyteris advolvi, & charis Dei adgeniculari, omnibus fratribus legationes deprecationis suæ injungere. — Hæc omnia Exomologesis — ut pœnitentiam commendat, &c. *ibid. in lib. de Pœnitent. cap. 9.*

All this the publick Exomologesis requires the Penitent to submit to.

Pacian (who liv'd in the Middle of the fourth Century) describes the receiv'd Forms of *Penance* after much the same Manner, only he blames the Looseness which then began to creep into the Performance of it. (u) *We do not* (says he) *observe, as we should do, so much as those outward Forms, which lie open to the very Eye of the Judge, and might draw Commendation from him, such as weeping in the Face of the Church, lamenting in mournful Habit the Depravity of our Lives and Manners; Fasting, Prayer, and Prostration; Refusal of all publick Divertisements and Entertainments, as Persons who have sinned against God, and are consequently in Danger of eternal Destruction. In fine, all humble Supplication to the Poor, the Widows, the Presbyters, each Member of the Church to intercede for us; thus trying all Conclusions, rather than the last and fatal one, of irretrieveable Ruin.*

Ambrose will afford us a further Illustration of the Rigour wherewith the penitential Discipline was in his Time executed; and the Case in which he chuses to instance, is that of a Person who should voluntarily confess his *secret Crimes*, and submit to *Penance*; which yet (we must remember) was to be so much the lighter, for the Piety exemplify'd by coming in of

(u) *Ne hæc quidem quæ videri etiam à sacerdote possunt, & Episcopo teste laudari, ne hæc quidem quotidiana servamus, flere in conspectu Ecclesiæ: perditam vitam sordidâ veste lugere, jejunare, orare, provolvi; si quis ad Balneum vocet, recusare Delicias; si quis ad convivium vocet, dicere, ista foelicibus! Ego deliqui in Dominum, & periclitor in æternum perire! Quo mihi Epulas, qui Dominum læsi? Tenere præterea pauperum manus, viduas obsecrare, Presbyteris advolvi, exoratricem Ecclesiam deprecari; omnia prius tentare, quam pereas. Pacian. in Parænesi. ad Penitent.*

of his own Accord. "He asks (v) what Encouragement such an one can have to do so who hath no Hope of Absolution? 'Tis true, he would have him ask it once and again, and impute it to his own Want of due Intreaty, that he did not suddenly obtain it. Let him beg it therefore (he goes on) with Tears and Groans, and let him interest the whole Congregation in the Request he makes for it, by all the humble Strains of Submission he can any Way think of."

He proceeds. "I have known many who have done so, who have quite furrow'd their Faces with Cares and Tears; who have prostrated themselves, 'till they have even exposed their Bodies to be trod on, and have carry'd in their Faces the Marks of that Severity wherewith they have been disciplin'd, looking like so many walking Ghosts."

Finally, what represents to us very clearly the extream Rigors of this Discipline, is, the Comment so generally made upon that of St. Paul to the *Corinthians*, (1 Epist. 5 chap. 5 vers.) *The Delivery of such an one* (as is there described) *to Satan for the Destruction of the Flesh*, which

was

(v) Si quis igitur occulta crimina habens propter Christum tamen studiosè poenitentiam egerit, quomodo istic recipit si ei communio non refunditur? Volo veniam reus speret, petat cum lachrymis, petat gemitibus, petat populi totius fletibus, ut ignoscatur obsecret, & cùm secundò & tertio dilata fuerit ejus communio, credat remissiùs se supplicasse, fletus augeat miserabilior, postea revertatur, teneat pedes brachiis, osculetur osculis, lavet fletibus, nec dimittat, ut de ipso dicat Dominus Jesus; remissa sunt peccata ejus multa, quoniam dilexit multum. — Cognovi quosdam in poenitentia fulcasse vultum lachrymis, exarasse continuis fletibus genas, stravisse corpus suum calcandum omnibus, jejuno ore semper & pallido mortis speciem spiranti in corpore prætulisse. *Ambros. de Poenitent. lib. 1. cap. 16.*

was usually afterwards interpreted of the Severities attending Penance.

(w) *In that which the Apostle mentions concerning the Destruction of the Flesh, (says Origen) he means those Bodily Austerities which are so commonly undergone by Penitents.*

Tertullian (tho' he disapprov'd of the Interpretation, yet) bears Witness to it, as what was in Fact receiv'd amongst the Orthodox of his Age. (x) *They (i. e. his Adversaries the then Orthodox) interpret the Destruction of the Flesh concerning penitential Mortifications, wherewith the Persons under that Discipline think to make Satisfaction for their Sins.*

Pacian gives us the same Construction of those Words, where he tells *Sempronian*, (y) *That they are but few, in the Comparison, who rise again after their Fall, who recover from their Wounds, and are perfectly sound again; who feel the Success and Comfort of their Tears and Supplications, and who revive again after the Destruction of their Flesh. All this he evidently applies to the Case of Penitents, and to the Discipline undergone by them.*

Upon the whole, I think we may observe, that the Power of the Keys in shutting the Church-Doors (i. e. in Binding) was executed heretofore with great Severity; that no Man could then
fin

(w) Quod enim dicit Apostolus, tradidi in interitum carnis, hoc est in afflictionem corporis, quæ solet à penitentibus expendi. *Origen. in Homil. 14. super Levitic. cap. 24.*

(x) Hæc jam carnis interitum in officium penitentium interpretantur, quod videatur jejuniis & fordibus & incuriæ omni, & deditæ operæ malæ tractationis carnem exterminando satis Deo facere. *Tertull. de Pudicit. cap. 13.*

(y) Labor vero iste paucorum est, qui post casum resurgunt, qui post vulnera convalescunt, qui lachrymosis vocalibus adjuvantur, qui carnis interitu reviviscunt. *Pacian. in Epist. 3. ad Sempronian.*

sin scandalously upon cheap or easy Terms, if ever he expected or su'd for Pardon; nay, that even secret Sins were anciently accounted for; and that the Persons who had been guilty of them, were much exhorted to unfold them, and much commended for the Discovery, when they were prevail'd with to make it.

But why all this? may it yet be said. Why all this Trouble and Difficulty in the Cure of Sin, which *bath* the Magistrate *here* to *punish*, and *will* have God *hereafter* to *avenge* it?

Now to account for this, it were sufficient if we only urg'd the Obligation which the primitive Christians thought themselves under to comply with an Ordinance of the Gospel; and to exact the *penitential*, as well as the *baptismal Discipline*. For we read (if I rightly remember) as much in their Writings of *Penitents*, as we do of *Catechumens*; of as much Sollicitude and Care in the Church of God for the one, as we do for the other.

Penance was indeed reckon'd as a Supplement to *Baptism*; allow'd, as that was, *once*, and *once* only; at least but *once* for the same Offence.

(z) God *bath* plac'd a second Penitence (saith Tertullian) at the Door of the Church, for those to re-enter by, who are desirous of it; but then they are permitted to enter but once by this latter Way, because it is their second Tryal, and because it appears by it, that they have broken their former Engagements.

G

(a)

(z) Collocavit in vestibulo poenitentiam secundam quæ pulsantibus patefaciat, sed jam semel, quia jam secundò, sed ampliùs nunquam, quia proximè frustra. *Tertull. de Penitent. cap. 7.*

(a) *Ambrose asks the Novatians, Why they baptiz'd, if, according to their Tenet, Sin might not be remitted by the Ministry of Men? For 'tis agreed, (says he) that all Sins are in Baptism remitted; where then is the Difference, whether the Priest claims to himself the Exercise of this Power by the Ordinance of Baptism, or by that of Penance? And again, (b) As there is one Baptism, so there is but one solemn Penance allowable; and that must be publick in the Face of the Church.*

We might well enough therefore put our Account of this Matter upon the Foot of its being a Gospel-Ordinance, and what, as such, would need no other Account to be given of it.

But besides the Authority of Institution, and of current Practice form'd upon it; I find moreover some Reasons assign'd for it in primitive Records; of which my Reader shall not be defrauded: As,

1. The Honour of the Church was one of these, which, in the Design of Christ her Founder, was to consist of a *peculiar People zealous of good Works, that so he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without Blemish*, Ephes. 5. 27. Agreeable to which, is that Passage in the Constitutions, which speaks thus:

(a) *Cur baptizatis, si per hominem peccata dimitti non licet? In baptismo utique remissio peccatorum omnium est. Quid interest utrum per poenitentiam, an per lavacrum hoc jus sibi datum sacerdotes vendicent? Unum in utroq; ministerium est. Ambros. de Poenitent. lib. 1. cap. 7.*

(b) *Sicut unum baptisma ita una poenitentia, quæ tamen publicè agitur. ibid. lib. 2. cap. 10.*

thus: (c) *If we do not separate from the Church those who will not live within the Rules of it, we shall make of the House of God a Den of Thieves.*

2. Another Ground of this Discipline, was Example to others, that they (d) *might fear*, and learn from thence not to *offend*, when they should see and observe the Difficulties of obtaining *Pardon*.

3. The last Ground of this Discipline, was the Advantage of the Delinquent himself, that *by the Destruction of his Flesh*, (as the Apostle speaks 1 Cor. 5. 5.) *his Spirit might be sav'd in the Day of the Lord Jesus.*

Upon these I shall no longer now detain my Reader, because I may have Occasion to resume them before I finish.

But he will see from what is cited to this Purpose, that (e) *Tertullian*, (f) *Pacian*, and (g) *Austin*, are all with me, in assigning the Benefit

G 2

fit

(c) *ἐὰν ὃν καὶ ἀνθρώπου ἀφ' ὧν μὴ ἔσκηλοῖται τὸ θεῶν Χωρὶσμῶν, παρησώμῃ καὶ οἶκον κυρίου (τῆς λαοῦ). Apostol. Constitut. lib. 2. cap. 17.*

(d) *ὅπως καὶ τοῖς ἑτέροις ἐυλαβεῖαν ἡμπαύσῃ. ibid.*

(e) Temporalis afflictione æterna supplicia, non dicam frustratur (Exomologesis) sed expungit. Cum igitur provolvit hominem, magis relevat; cum squalidum facit, mundatum reddit; cum accusat, excusat; cum condemnat, absolvit. In quantum non peperceris tibi, in tantum tibi Deus, crede, parceret. *Tertull. de Pœnitent. cap. 9.*

(f) In quantum pœnæ vestræ non peperceritis, in tantum vobis Deus parceret. — Qui fratribus peccata sua non tacer, Ecclesiæ lachrymis adjutus, Christi precibus absolvitur. *Pacian. in Paranes. ad Pœnitent.*

(g) Id agat (Pœnitens) quod non solum illi profit ad recipiendam salutem, sed etiam cæteris ad exemplum. — Ut qui separari à regno Cœlorum timet per ultimam sententiam summæ judicis, per Ecclesiasticam disciplinam, à sacramento cœlestis panis interim separetur. — Agite pœnitentiam qualis

fit of the Delinquent for one great Reason of the *penitential Discipline*.

Well then, when all this had been submitted to, the Penitent's Access to *Reconciliation* was almost open; only, as it hath been already suggested, he was (ever since the Time of *Novatus*) oblig'd to stand for a while in the *Station* of *Consistentia*, i. e. to be *present* at the holy Mysteries, but not immediately to be a *Partaker*, lest he should seem to rush upon them too suddenly from a State of Sin. But *then* the Door was entirely open to him, and he might re-enter upon all his Privileges by the Benefit of *Absolution*; which was the third and finishing Branch of the ancient Church-Discipline.

S E C T. III. *Of Absolution.*

It hath been already in Part observ'd, that this was the main Ground of the Dispute between the *Montanists* (first, and after them between the *Novatians*) and the Orthodox. They were agreed in (*b*) separating such and such Offenders from the Church; but they (*i*) disagreed upon the Point of receiving them again into it. The *Sectary* said, *Nay*, (*k*) *stand off, for I am bo-
lier*

lis agitur in Ecclesiâ, ut oret pro vobis Ecclesia. Nemo sibi dicat, occultè ago, apud Deum ago; novit Deus, qui mihi ignoscit, quia in corde ago. Ergo sine causâ dictum est, *Quæ solveritis in terrâ, soluta erunt & in Cælis*? Ergo sine causâ sunt claves datæ Ecclesiæ? frustramus Evangelium Dei? frustramus verba Christi? Promittimus vobis quod ille negat? *August. in Hom. 49 & 50.*

(*b*) Reliquas libidinum furias non modo limine, verum omni Ecclesiæ recto submovemus. *Tertull. de Pudicit. cap. 4.*

(*i*) See in pag. 62, 63. Notes *a, b, c, d, e.*

(*k*) Arroganti voce dicentes singuli; Noli me tange, quia mundus sum. *Ambros. de Penitent. lib. 1. cap. 7.*

lier than thou; whereas the Church had Compassion, and after some Time of Separation allowed them to approach. Only when these Sects had rais'd Clamours, and started Objections, the Church continu'd her Penitents a good deal longer in a State of Discipline, before she would admit them to full Communion.

The Ceremonial of their Re-admission, we have no where (as I can find) exactly describ'd to us; of what was previous to it, we have abundant mention, *viz.* the Confession and Humiliation of the Party, the Intercessions of the People with the Bishop on his Behalf; sometimes *Libelli*, or Tickets from the Martyrs, were obtain'd, to recommend him to the Bishop's Favour for his speedier Restoration; of all which, *St. Cyprian* alone will furnish the Reader with sufficient Evidence.

(1) " His Complaint of such Presbyters as had
" irregularly admitted certain Offenders to Com-
" munion, shews us what the regular Process
" should have been, *viz.* That they should have
" had their Case examin'd narrowly in all its
" Circumstances, and an Inspection made into
" their Lives; and have done Penance for their
" Fault;

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(1) Illi contra Evangelii legem — ante actam pœnitentiam, ante Exomologesim gravissimi atq; extremi delicti factam, ante manum ab Episcopo & Clero, in pœnitentiam impositam, offerre lapsis pacem, & Eucharistiam dare; id est, sanctum Domini Corpus profanare audent. *Cyprian. in Epist. 10.*

Audio quosdam de Presbyteris nec Evangelii memores, nec quid ad nos Martyres scripserint cogitantes, nec Episcopo honorem sacerdotii sui & cathedræ reservantes, jam cum lapsis communicare cœpisse & offerre pro illis, & Eucharistiam dare, quando oporteat ad hæc per ordinem perveniri. Nam cum in *Minoribus delictis*, quæ non in Dominum committuntur, pœnitentia agatur justo tempore, & Exomologesis fiat, inspectâ vitâ ejus qui agit pœnitentiam, nec ad communicati-

onem

“ Fault; and acknowledg’d it with all humble
 “ Solemnity in the Face of the Church, and
 “ have begg’d Pardon for it of all who might
 “ have took Scandal at it; and then after Im-
 “ position of Hands from the Bishop and his
 “ Clergy, and solemn Prayers offer’d up to God
 “ on their Behalf, they should thus, after some
 “ Time, have been re-admitted to the Privileges
 “ they had forfeited. ”

Yet neither does this, nor any other Author of his Date, acquaint us precisely what the Form of their Re-admission was. The Apostolick Constitutions give us here some Light, but it is not clear nor full enough to discover this Part of the penitential Discipline in its just Proportions.

(m) *Do you, (say they) O Bishop, do in like Manner; and as you initiate an Heathen in the Church of Christ by Baptism, so restore with Imposition of Hands the Man who hath been cleans’d by the Discipline of Penance, to his ancient Pasture, the whole*

onem quis venire possit, nisi prius illi ab Episcopo & Clero manus fuerit imposita, quanto magis in his gravissimis & extremis delictis, cautè omnia & moderatè secundum disciplinam Domini observari oportet? *ibid. in Epist. 11.*

Temperamentum salubri moderatione libravimus, ut nec in totum spes communicationis & pacis lapsis denegaretur — nec tamen rursus censura Evangelica solveretur, ut ad communicationem temerè proflirent.; sed traheretur diu pœnitentia, & rogaretur dolenter paterna Clementia, & examinerentur causæ, & voluntates, & necessitates singulorum. *ibid. in Epist. 52. Rigalt. Edit. Paris. 1666.*

(m) ἔτως ἔν κ' σὺ τόποι, ὃ ὀπίσκει· ἀλλ' ὅσπ' τ' ἐθνη-
 κὸν λ' ὅσας εἰσδέχ' μετὰ τ' διδασκαλίαν, ἔτω κ' τὸν χειροθε-
 τήσας ὡς ἂν μετάνοιαν κεκαθαρσμένον, πάντην ὑπὸ αὐτῷ
 προεσκόμω, ἀποκαταστήσας αὐτὸν εἰς τ' ἀρχαῖαν αὐτοῦ νο-
 μὴν· κ' ἔσται αὐτῷ ἀντὶ τῆ λέμεν· ἡ χειροθεσία. Apostol.
 Constitut. lib. 2^a cap. 41.

πρὸς

whole Congregation interceding for him, to whom the Ceremony of Imposition of Hands shall serve for that Time in the Room of Baptism. And again in another Chapter of the same Book, *Admonish Offenders*; and after having assign'd them for some Time to a State of Mortification, take off their Burden by a Pardon, and accept their Tears; and when the whole Church intercedes for them, lay your Hands upon them, and afterwards suffer them to continue unmolested in the Church of Christ.

From hence then we gather thus much, (tho not all we would) that there were the *Intercessions of the Church*, the *Intercessions of the chief Minister*, and his *Imposition of Hands*, all apply'd to the Restoration of the Offender. But then these (we shall see) were all along apply'd to him, throughout the whole Course of his *penitential Discipline*, as well as at the very *Instant of his Restoration*. Now whether there was any peculiar Ceremonial in the very *Article of his passing out of the Penitential*, into the *Station of the Faithful*, other, or more, than what hath here been represented, is a Query which would be well worth pursuing, if we knew where it would be likely to find an Answer; all the Authors of any standing, whom I have yet look'd into, keeping here a profound Silence.

But by what we can learn of the *primitive Absolution*, out of *primitive Writers*, it should seem to have been not a *single*, but a *complex Act*; an *Effect* arising from a Course and Succession of *divers Acts*; what the People had some

G 4

Hand

τὸ πρᾶγμα τὸν κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ τὸν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐλαττωσάντων, καὶ προσκαλῶσάντων εἰς δέχεται, πᾶσι δὲ ἐκκλησίας ἐπὶ αὐτῷ δεσφύσας, καὶ χειροτονήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ λειτῶν εἶναι ἐν τῷ ποιμνίῳ. *ibid.* in cap. 28.

Hand in, as well as the *Priest*; only with this just and necessary Distinction, that the *Prayers* of the *People* are here to be consider'd as *Testimonies* of their *Charity*, rather than as *Evidences* of any *Authority*; whereas in the *Priest* they are to be consider'd as flowing from his *Office*, and warranted by it; and therefore as standing *entitled* to a *Success* and *Efficacy*, which the *People* could lay no Claim to. (n) "He being an authorized Mediator, and supplying upon Earth the Place of his great Master Christ, doing for the People under him, what was done for them by the Priests under the Law, viz. atoning for their Sins, and offering up to God unbloody Sacrifices, through Jesus Christ, the great High Priest."

(o) "For this very Reason (saith *Chrysostom*) do the Priests of God preside in his Worship, that the Prayers of the People being in themselves less available, may lay Hold on those of the Priest, as more powerful and efficacious, and so may jointly ascend to Heaven."

And so very considerable was the Priest's Agency in this Matter, represented by St. *Cyprian*, that

(n) Ὑμεῖς δὲν (ἡμερῶν) Ἐπίσκοποι, ἐκ τῆς λαῶν ὑμῶν ἱερέας λεύεται, οἱ λευτερογενῆς τῇ ἱερᾷ σκηνῇ, τῇ ἀγίᾳ καὶ θολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, καὶ παρεσῶτες τῇ θυσιασθείᾳ κυρίου τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν, καὶ προσάγοντες αὐτῷ τὰς λογικάς, καὶ ἀναιμάκτους θυσίας διὰ Ἰησοῦ τῷ μεγάλῳ ἀρχιερέως. Ὑμεῖς τοῖς ἐν ὑμῶν λαϊκοῖς ἐκτελεσθῆναι, ἀρχόντες, καὶ ἡγεμόνοι, καὶ βασιλεῖς, οἱ μεσῖται θεῷ; καὶ ἵψ' αὐτῶν αὐτῶν — οἱ πάντων τὰς ἀμαρτίας βασάζοντες, καὶ πάντων ἀπολογεῖσθαι. Apostol. Constitut. lib. 2. cap. 25.

(o) Διὰ τὸ αὐτὸ οἱ ἱερεῖς προσεθήκησαν, ἵνα καὶ αἱ τῶν πλῆθους ἐκκλησιῶν ἀδυνατεῖς εἶναι ἵψ' δυνατῶν ἱερῶν τῶν ὀπταβόμων, ἐμὲς συνανίστασιν αὐταῖς εἰς τὸ ὅλον. Chrysostom. de Incomprehensib. Dei Natur. Homil. 3.

that the Penitent's (p) *Forgiveness* was said expressly to *be procur'd by it*.

None of all this was intended to derogate from the Office of our *one Mediator*, nor to invade the Province, which, in Strictness of speaking, belongs to *him* only. But whatever of this Nature was ascrib'd to the Priest, was ascrib'd to him in Character and Quality of his being *Agent for Christ*, as *sustaining his Person* among Men, as being his *Steward* and his *Ambassador*, and as acting entirely *by*, and *under* his *Authority*.

The *People* then, tho' they join'd with the Bishop in his *Intercession* to God on the Penitent's Behalf, yet bore not the same Part in it, which he did. *He* pray'd for them to God, with *Authority*, as *invested* with a *certain Character* for that very Purpose; and so what *he* did, was in *Virtue* of his *Office*; whereas *they* only evidenc'd their *Charity*, by testifying, that *they* did likewise desire the Penitent's *Forgiveness*.

But in the *Imposition of Hands*, (which was the *solemn Ceremony* of *sacerdotal Benediction*, wherein the *Less* was *blest'd of the Greater*) the People did no Way meddle. We read of (q) *Hands laid on by the Bishop and his Clergy*, but never by the Laity.

Whether then there was any further or more solemn Ceremonial us'd at the *Instant* of *re-admitting Penitents*, than merely suffering them to *take their former Place in the Church amongst the Faithful*, I have not, I say, been able to learn with

(p) Dum satisfactio, & remissio facta per sacerdotes apud Dominum grata est. Cyprian. de lapsi.

(q) Næc ad communicationem quis venire possit, nisi ab Episcopo & Clero manus fuerit imposita. Cyprian. in Epist. 11. cited in pag. 85. Note 1.

with my best Enquiries. *The Intercession of the Priest to God for them, and his Imposition of Hands upon them in Token of blessing them,* were Formularies apply'd to them very often, at least, if not in each Assembly for solemn Worship, throughout the whole Course of their penitential Separation.

Imposition of Hands, was the Ceremonial where-with they were receiv'd to Penance. St. *Cyprian*, complaining that Penitents were receiv'd to Communion, without any of the preparatory Stages to it, hath shew'd us what those Stages were, and by what Steps they should have risen to it. (r) "First, Hands should have been laid upon them, in order to their Penance. Then should have succeeded the solemn Exomologesis, or humble Confession of their Fault in the Face of the Church; and finally they should have gone thro' the appointed Stations of Penance, before they were admitted in full to the Privilege of Communion." The Council of (rr) *Agatha* "bears Witness to this, as a general and current Practice in the Reception of Penitents, and confirms it moreover by express Authority."

Here is therefore plain Evidence, that *Imposition of Hands* was not peculiar to the *Instant* of the *Penitent's Restoration*.

When

(r) Ante actam poenitentiam, ante Exomologesim gravissimam atq; extremi delicti factam, ante manum ab Episcopo & Clero in poenitentiam impositam, offerre lapsis pacem, & Eucharistiam dare — audent. See the whole Passage cited in pag. 85. Note l. *Cyprian. Epist. 10.*

(rr) Poenitentes tempore quo poenitentiam petunt — (sicut ubiq; constitutum est) Impositionem manuum — consequantur. In Concil. *Agathens. habit. A. D. 506. Can. 15.*

When the Time of *publick Penance* grew to be confin'd to the *Quadragesimal Fast*, all the Formularies appertaining to it, were crowded into that narrow Compass. Now, the fourth Council of *Carthage* hath inform'd us, that (s) *Hands were to be laid upon the Penitent during that whole Season.* And indeed *Imposition of Hands* was a Ceremony so well known to be an Attendant upon Penance during the whole Season of its Continuance, that the Discipline it self did sometimes receive its Name from this (which was such a considerable) *Part* of it. Thus (ss) another Canon of the same Council hath forewarn'd the *Clinical Penitent* not to account himself absol'd, (if he should recover) without *Imposition of Hands*; which there, I think, must signify *Penance*; since (according to St. (t) *Cyprian*) he must have receiv'd *Imposition of Hands*, at his being admitted to *Penance* upon his *sick Bed*; and therefore when he is warn'd to receive it *again* upon his *Recovery*, it must mean his Submission to the *Penance* which had been *then* assign'd him. And this was conformable to the known Practice of Antiquity upon these Occasions.

Hence therefore I conclude, that *Imposition of Hands* was neither peculiar to the *Reception of Penitents to their Penance*, nor yet to their *Absolution from it*; but was indeed intermix'd with the *Seasons*

(s) *Omni tempore jejunii manus pœnitentibus à sacerdotibus imponatur. In Concil. Carthag. 4. Can. 80.*

(ss) *Pœnitentes qui infirmitate viaticum Eucharistiæ acceperint, non se credant absolutos sine manus impositione, si supervixerint. ibid. Can. 72.*

(t) See what is cited in Chap. 3. Sect. 3. Note 1. Ut manu eis in pœnitentiâ impositâ, veniant ad Dominum cum pace. *In Epist. 13.*

sons of Worship, so long as they continu'd under it.

In the sixth Century, when this whole Discipline was much relax'd, and the Forms of it were mightily alter'd, the third Council of (t t) *Toledo* call'd the People to rule, and labour'd to bring them to the ancient Standard; and therefore in Pursuance of the *original Pattern*, it hath directed *Penitents to resort with Frequency to Imposition of Hands*. They would then, it appears from the Preamble of the Canon, perform their Penance as they list'd, and neglect the Stations assign'd them. The Canon therefore appoints, that they should keep their Stations, and behave in them like Penitents, *by frequently resorting to Imposition of Hands*.

The usual Form of Intercession for Penitents, (which the Reader may see in the Appendix No. 4.) made a constant *Part* of the more solemn Service in the earlier Ages of the Church. And it was call'd the *Prayer for Penitents with Imposition of Hands*; so that *this Ceremony* seems to have been us'd as often as the *Prayer* was. When both had therefore been us'd 'till the Time appointed for the Penitent's full Re-admission to all his Privileges, the Direction to the Bishop runs only thus; (u) *Lay your Hands upon him, and let him thenceforwards remain unmolested in the Fold*. Or thus again, to much the same Effect, — *Re-store*

(t t) — Ut secundum formam antiquorum canonum dentur poenitentiae; hoc est, ut prius eum quem sui poeniter facti, à communione suspensum faciat [Presbyter] inter Reliquos poenitentes *ad manus impositionem crebro recurrere*. In Concil. Toletan. 3. cap. 11.

(u) Χειρὸν θέτας αὐτὸν ἕα λοιπὸν εἶναι ἐν τῇ ποιμανίῃ. —
& — ἀποκαταστήσεις αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν εἰρηλατικὴν αὐτοῦ νομίμην. In lib.
2. Constitut. cap. 11 & 41.

store him to his former Pasture. If there had been any more *solemn Usage*, (peculiar to the Instant of his quitting the penitential Station) here one would have thought had been a fit Occasion of mentioning it. But from the Silence of the Constitutions here, and indeed of all the Authors which it hath yet been my Fortune to meet with upon the Subject, I suppose we may conclude, that there was no farther *Apparatus*; but that the Penitent, without more adoe, took his Place among the *Faithful* when his Term was expir'd, and *Hands* had been laid upon him, and Prayers put up to God for him; all which we may well however believe to have been done at *this* Time also, as it had probably been done before in each Assembly for solemn Worship.

Absolution therefore seems to have consisted originally of two main Branches; the one respecting the *forum internum*, (the Conscience of the Sinner) the other relating to the *forum externum*, (the outward Regimen of the Church.)

The *first* of these was instrumental to the Pardon of Sin, whilst the *second* relax'd the *Censure* it lay under. The *one* interceded with God for the Sinner's *Forgiveness*, and the *other* declar'd him *releas'd* from his *Ecclesiastical Bond*.

Now, the first of these Acts was always in Form of *Prayer* throughout the earliest Ages; and the Reader will hereafter find, that it continu'd so for 1000 Years.

(u u) *Morinus* will acknowledge thus much; as well as that the *forum internum* and *externum* have not long been distinguish'd from each other; but then he fain would pass upon his
Reader

(u u) *Morin. de Pœnitent. lib. 1. cap. 9. sect. 6.* See him quoted at large in Chap. 3. Sect. 3. Note d.

Reader the Notion of *secret* (m) *Penance* for Sins, which (tho' mortal indeed in their Nature, yet) were not of the very deepest Dye. This is the Distinction upon which he grafts all the present Practice of the *Roman* Church, in what is call'd by those of its Communion, the *Sacrament of Penance*. But then he is so ingenuous, as to confess, that the *Mention of it amongst ancient Writers, is very hardly to be met with*; which is so true, that it is not in any Manner to be found amongst them.

In Reality therefore, this Practice, if it were at all carry'd on within the first 500 Years, was carry'd so very *secretly*, that it looks as if it had been design'd for a perpetual *Secret*, since I can no where find, within that Period, any Mention of it.

The ancient Distinction between Sins, was, what hath been cited from *Tertullian*, viz. between such as were *remissible*, and such as were *irremissible*, (which was indeed the rigid Judgment of the *Montanists*) but the Orthodox express'd this Distinction in a softer Way, viz. between Sins of *Frailty* and of *Wilfulness*; the one of which they allow'd to be curable by Penance, the other by daily Prayer. More of which the Reader will observe in the Sequel.

But now as to the Forgiveness of Sin, (respecting the *forum internum*, or the Court of Conscience) it is certain that God only doth strictly and

(m) Primum distinctionem peccatorum mortalium, gravium à minus gravibus, consequitur — *Istorum sex fere sæculis integris, poenitentia agebatur publica, horum secreta. Ista ab Episcopo aut ejus jussu puniebantur, & relaxabantur; hæc verò Presbyterorum potestati erant permissa — forum igitur dici poterat duplex; sed istius posterioris longè rarior est mentio. Morin. de Pœnitent. lib. 1. cap. 10, 12.*

and properly pardon it; or (as *Ambrose* will presently be found speaking) *impart the holy Spirit*, who is evermore suppos'd to enter, where the Sin is pardon'd. (v) *Irenæus* hath argu'd upon this Supposal, where he hath inform'd his Reader, "That our Saviour in curing the Paralytick, and forgiving his Sins, manifested himself to be the *Word* of God, and in Quality of God and Man together, receiv'd such Power from his Father."

Man alone was, in that Father's Opinion, plainly incapable of forgiving Sins, since the Pardon of them made Proof of a Power superior to any human Agent's.

Clemens (v v) *Alexandrinus* hath directly asserted, That Christ alone, who is appointed our School-master and Instructor, by the God and Father of the Universe, is able to forgive our Sins; he alone being able to discern the Sincerity or Insincerity of our Obedience.

(n) *Amphilochius* (or whoever else was the Author

(v) *Peccata igitur remittens hominem quidem curavit, semetipsum autem manifestè ostendit quis esset. Si enim nemo potest remittere peccata, nisi solus Deus, remittebat autem hæc Dominus, & curabat homines; manifestum est quoniam ipse erat verbum Dei, filius hominis factus, à patre potestatem remissionis peccatorum accipiens quomodo homo & quomodo Deus. Irenæ. l. 5. advers. Hæres. cap. 17. Mat. 9. 5.*

(v v) *Ὁ μὲν τὸ πρῶτον εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἀφίενται τὰ πλημμελήματα τὰ ὑμῶν τῷ πατρὶ ὅτι ἐλθὼν ὁ ταχθεὶς παιδαγωγὸς ἡμεῶν, μόνος ὁ ἱκανὸς διακρίνει τὴν ἀληθείαν καὶ τὴν ψευδίαν. Clement. Alexandrin. Pædagog. lib. 1. cap. 8.*

(n) *ἤκουσας, γυναι, ὅτι εἰς δύναμις ἀφίενται ἁμαρτίας, εἰ μὴ μόνος ὁ θεός; ἡ δὲ εἶπεν, ἤκουσα. καὶ διὰ τὸ ἐκινήσας σε εἰς πρῶτον τὴν φιλοκρίτην σου. — Βασίλειος ἀπεκρίθη πρὸς σε, ὅπως εὐχαρίστησας τὸν θεὸν ὅτι ἐκάλει σε καὶ ἀνέστη. — σὺ δὲ ὑπομείνεις μὴ ἐκινήσας ἀποκρίσασθαι τὸν θεόν. — Amphiloch. in. Vit. Basil.*

thor of that Work) hath related a remarkable Passage in the *Life of Basil*, concerning a Woman of Quality and Distinction, who had been a great Sinner, and resorted to *Basil*, that she might thro' his Means obtain Pardon. *Do'st thou know*, (said he to this Lady) *that none can forgive Sins, but God only?* To which she readily reply'd, *I do know it, and therefore I am come to engage thy Intercession with God for me.* And when *Basil* sent her, on Account of her last and most heinous Sin, to the Hermit *Ephrem*, in order to procure his *Intercession* for it, she besought the holy Man most fervently, that *since Basil had interceded for all the rest, he would not grudge her his Prayers for that single Fault.*

I am not to answer for the Truth or Likelihood of all the Circumstances recited in this Story; I only quote it as attesting the Doctrine of those Times, concerning the *Agency* of the *Priest* in the *Remission of Sins*. And this, I conceive, it speaks fully up to.

Thus likewise we read in *Ambrose*. (w) *This is no Work of Man, but of God, (viz. imparting the holy Spirit.) The Spirit is indeed invoc'd by the Priest, but he is given by God; so that the Gift is God's, and the Ministry only belongs to the Priest. For if the Apostle St. Paul judg'd his own Authority*

(w) Non enim humanum hoc opus, neq; ab homine datur; sed invocatus [Spiritus] à sacerdote, à Deo traditur; in quo Dei munus, ministerium sacerdotis est. Nam si Paulus Apostolus judicavit, quòd ipse donare spiritum sanctum suâ Auctoritate non posset, & in tantum se huic officio imparem credidit, ut à Deo nos spiritu optaret impleri; quis tantus est, qui hujus Traditionem muneris sibi audeat arrogare? Itaq; Apostolus votum precatione detulit, non jus Autoritate aliquâ vendicavit. Impetrare optavit, non imperare presumpsit. Ambros. de Spiritu Sancto. lib. 1. cap. 7. Again,

Authority incompetent for so great a Purpose, who is there amongst us so assuming as to pretend to it? Now the Apostle ('tis plain) offer'd up his Desire of it in Form of Prayer, without assuming to himself any Authoritative Disposal of it.

Again — *God alone forgiveth Sins. — The holy Spirit doth it, and the Part which Men bear in this Action of Forgiveness, is only applying their Ministry to it, not exercising any direct Authority; for they remit Sins not in their own, but in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. They intercede, but the Deity confers the Grant.*

The Author of the Work (ascrib'd usually to St. Cyprian) concerning the *Baptism of Christ*, expresses himself to much the same Purpose with what hath been cited from *Ambrose*. (w w) *Remission of Sins, whether by Baptism, or by any other Ordinance, is properly (he observes) the Act of the Spirit of God, and the Efficacy of it is to be entirely ascrib'd to him; whatever Agency the Priest may have in it, by Words or Gestures, or any Formularies deriv'd to him from Apostolical Institution.*

The Priest therefore in this Branch of *Abso-*
lution, must content himself with the *Office of*
H In-

Peccata nemo condonat nisi solus Deus — per Spiritum Sanctum peccata condonantur; homines autem in remissione peccatorum Ministerium suum exhibent; non jus alienius potestatis exercent. Neq; enim in suo, sed in Patris & Filii & Spiritus Sancti nomine peccata dimittunt. Isti rogant, Divinitas donat. ibid. in lib. 3. cap. 19.

(w w) *Remissio peccatorum sive per baptismum, sive per alia sacramenta donetur, propriè Spiritus Sancti est, & ipsi soli hujus efficientiæ privilegium manet. Verborum solennitas & sacri invocatio nominis & signa institutionibus Apostolicis sacerdotum Ministeriis attributa, visibile celebrant sacramentum; rem verò ipsam Spiritus Sanctus format & efficit. De Baptismo Christi, apud Cyprian.*

Intercessor, which he hath all along exercis'd in the Church of God. This, I humbly conceive, is all his Part in the *forum internum*; nor can it (I presume) be prov'd, that he challeng'd any other till 1000 Years had pass'd from the Birth of Christ (x).

But in the *forum externum*, (the outward Regimen of the Church) the Priest appears with another Character, and performs the Part of a *Judge in Commission from Christ*, since his Restoration of the Penitent to the Peace of the Church, and to outward visible Communion, is an authoritative, judicial *Act*, which he performs directly and properly in his own Person, and the Church is oblig'd to own what he does, as good and valid.

St. Cyprian thought an *Act* of the Priest in this Part of his Office, so authentick, that he held for *valid* even an (x x) *irregular Absolution*, and would not attempt to rescind a Sentence which had once been pass'd (how imprudently soever) by a Priest of the most high God.

This was what (y) *Augustin* refer'd to, when he

(x) See what is written and cited upon this Subject in Chap. 3. Sect. 4. N. B. The *Ordo Romanus* styles the Priest an *Umpire, Intercessor, and Mediator between God and Man*. So lately was this his Character! *Sequester ac medius inter Deum & peccatorem ordinatus* — & *Intercessor*. Ord. Roman. in Confess. Pœnitent. And our learned *Outram de Sacrificiis*, lib. 2. cap. 1. entitles the Christian Priesthood, *Patrocinium hominum apud Deum*, i. e. An Office, in Virtue of which the Persons bearing it, pleaded, as it were, *with God for Men*; and where an Offence had been committed, deprecated the one, in Behalf of the other.

(x x) *Pacem tamen (quomodocunq;) à sacerdote Dei semel datam non putavimus auferendam. Cyprian. in Epist. 59.*

(y) *Nemo arbitretur, fratres, propterea se consilium salutiferæ hujus debere pœnitentiæ contemnere, quia multos forte*

he cautions his People against *contemning the penitential Discipline*, because they might observe (perhaps) some approaching to the Holy Communion, whom they might suspect or know to be guilty of heinous Crimes. Inasmuch as tho' it might be true that they were so, yet no Proof was made of it; and we (says he) can restrain no one from our Communion, except he voluntarily confesses, or be arraign'd and convicted before some either Secular or Ecclesiastical Judge, inasmuch as it was unfit for the same Person to be both Accuser and Judge. This apparently refers not to the mediatorial, but to the judicial Office of the Priest; and so it must be confess'd do most other Passages in ancient Writers, (where they speak of the *penitential Discipline*) who generally mean by it the *forum externum*, the Admission to, or Exclusion from, the Ordinances of the Church.

The Restoration to Communion did indeed presuppose the Sin it was apply'd to, pardon'd thro' the Intercessions of the Priest, and the Mortifications which the Penitent underwent throughout the whole Course of the preceding Discipline. Since when the Time assign'd him for *Penance* was pass'd, he seems immediately to have taken the Place he stood in (amongst the *Faithful*) before his Separation. So that his Sin was gradually expiated by the *Deprecations* of the Minister of God throughout the whole Course of

H 2 his

forte advertit & novit ad sacra altaris accedere, quorum talia crimina non ignorat. — Quamvis enim vera sunt quedam, non tamen *judici* facile credenda sunt, nisi certis indicis demonstrentur. Nos vero à communione prohibere quendam non possumus, quamvis hæc prohibitio nondum sit mortalis, sed medicinalis, nisi aut sponte confessum, aut in aliquo sive sæculari, sive Ecclesiastico judicio nominatum atq; convictum. Quis enim sibi utrumq; audeat assumere, ut cuicumque ipse sit accusator & judex? *Augustin. in Homil. ult. ex. 50. cap. 12.*

his Continuance under a State of *Penance*; and it was judg'd to be *fully expiated*, when the Term of his Sentence was expir'd; and therefore upon his receiving (for the last Time) *Imposition of Hands* from the Bishop, he was immediately reinstated in all the Privileges of full Communion.

The Peace of the Church was given him; he was admitted or restor'd to Communion, after he had fulfill'd the Measure of that Satisfaction which was expected from him. Thus the (yy) Fathers variously express'd their Sense of that Matter; and this was the *Absolution* most frequently mentioned by them.

This did (I say) pre-suppose the other, viz. the *Forgiveness* of the Sinner from God, thro' the *Intercession* of the Priest. Had the Party not been suppos'd forgiven by God, he would never have been restor'd; the very Act of restoring him, was a Proof of the Opinion conceiv'd of him, that God had forgiven him; and to this *Forgiveness*, (on God's Part) it was the current Perswasion, that the whole preceding Discipline did very much contribute.

An Author so late as Gregory the Great could say, that the (z) *Absolution of the Bishop was then only significant and valid, when it follow'd the Determination of the supream Eternal Judge.*

But we must farther observe, that though the Priest's *Intercession for the Penitent*, was all along in the Truth of the Case distinguishable from the Penitent's *Restoration or Absolution*, yet in the
Order

(y y) *Pacem, communicationem, dari, reddi.* Cyprian. in Epist. 53. & Ambros. de Penitent. lib. 1. cap. 1.

Accipiat satisfactionis suæ modum. August. n. in Homil. ult. ex. 50. c. 11.

(z) Tunc enim vera est absolutio præsentis, cum æterni arbitrium sequitur judicis. Gregor. in Evangel. Homil. 26.

Order of Time it was not always so; for indeed immediately upon finishing the one, there follow'd the other. From the very Moment wherein he quitted his last *Station of Penance*, he took (for ought appears) his former Place among the *Faithful*, and then was entirely *loos'd* from his *Bond*.

So that the last Act of the Bishop in his *Imposition of Hands*, and his *Intercession* for the *Penitent*, was exactly Cotemporary with the *Penitent's Restoration*; and thus these two *Branches* of *Absolution* met at last in one common Point.

From what hath been deliver'd upon this Article, we may observe, that the *Absolution* of the *primitive Church* was for divers Centuries a *Correlative* to *publick Discipline*; that *restoring to Communion* did imply its having been before *detained*; that *giving the Peace of the Church* did infer the Party, to whom it was given, to have been in a State of *Enmity* with it; that *Reconciliation* did pre-suppose a *Quarrel*; and that *Loosing* could never properly be apply'd to any Case or Person, where there had been no *Binding*.

These several *Expressions* which then were us'd to represent *Absolution*, do clearly enough evince the Thing to us. The Course was then to bring a Man first under a State of Discipline, before *Intercessions* were made for him; and to be sure he was first brought under *Discipline*, before he was *relax'd* (or discharg'd) from it. To *absolve* was then to *mediate* with God for him, that his *Humiliation* might be accepted; and after a Course of penitential *Labours*, to *release* him from the Burden of them, and so to admit him in full to his former Privileges.

Pacian hath answer'd for us an Objection which might here arise, as to the *Pardon* of Sin

procur'd by the *Priest's Intercession*, and the consequent *Admission* of the Penitent to *Communion*, which was then esteem'd to carry with it the *Pardon of Sin*, because it first *suppos'd*, and then *declar'd* it.

(a) You will object, (says he) that God only can thus forgive Sin. True! but the Power of the Priest is, in this Case, the Power of God; for what else is meant by the Power of Binding and Loosing? I confess indeed that Pardon is not to be granted to any upon Penance, 'till there is some Reason to guess at the Will of God concerning them; and even then it is not to be granted, but upon mature Deliberation, after great Evidences of Contrition and Sorrow on their Parts: After much Intercession of the Church of God for them, and even then to be given with such a Reserve, as not to prejudge the Sentence of the Supreme Judge.

Upon the whole, I think my self bound in justice, to observe, that there hath not appear'd to me a single Instance of *Absolution*, where there had been no Penance during the first 400 Years after Christ; except in the Case of *Clinical Penitents*, which I shall presently mention. By what Steps, and upon what Occasions, the Change crept in from the *ancient* to the *modern Practice*, the next Chapter will assist my Reader to discover.

Much

(a) Solus hoc (inquies) Deus poterit: Verum est: Sed & quod per sacerdotes suos facit; ipsius potestas est; nam quid est illud quod Apostolis dicit, quæ ligaveritis in terris, ligata erunt & in cœlis; & quæcunq; solveritis in terris, soluta erunt & in cœlis — Scio, frater, hanc ipsam *pœnitentiæ veniam* non passim omnibus dari, nec antequam aut interpretatio divinæ voluntatis, aut forsitan visitatio fuerit, relaxari; magno pondere, magnoq; libramine, post multos gemitus effusionemq; lachrymarum; post totius Ecclesiæ preces, ita veniam pœnitentibus non negari, ut judicaturus Christo nemo præjudicet. *Pacian. in Epist. 1. ad Sempronian.*

Much of this may doubtless be accounted for, by that discretionary Power, which the various Administration of this Discipline proves to have been always vested in the *chief Officer* of the Church.

But then, if there be an *Ordinance appointed for the Remission of Sins*, it will ever be (with some) a Question, Whether Sins can be regularly remitted without the Use of it, by the *Ministry of Man*, (for of *God's Power* there is no Question.) *E. G.* If we were to debate the Point in the Case of Baptism: The Church hath doubtless a Power of *remitting Sins* to Persons *unbaptized*.

But how? Can it be done without the *Ordinance of Baptism*, where a Door is open to that solemn Initiation? We are in like manner agreed, that the Church is vested with Authority, to remit the Sins of Persons *baptized*. But how? Will it be allow'd in this, any more than in the former Case, to skip over the Ordinance, and to *absolve* without any regard to it?

The Holy Eucharist (it may be said by some) is appointed for this Purpose; but it will be reply'd (perhaps) by others, that none were intended to partake of it, who had committed deadly Sins, without this *penitential Preparation*; that according to the Rules of the Gospel, (if we may judge of those Rules by their Practice, which next succeeded them) such Persons are oblig'd to abstain, 'till they have *satisfy'd* for the *Scandal* by a *publick Humiliation*.

The Matter of *Right* I shall not here undertake to determine: But the *Fact* was plainly this, that, after such Offences, *Penance* was for many Ages the Door to *Communion*.

(b) So that we may ask, I believe, with *Ambrose*, as lately cited, *where at last is the Difference*, whether the Church claims *this Right of remitting Sins by one Ordinance*, or by another; by *Baptism*, or by *Penance*? And we may observe again, as he did, *that as there is one Baptism, so there should be one, and only one solemn Penance; and that to be in the Face of the Church.*

Much to the same Purpose is what *Augustin* hath advis'd, in the Case of scandalous Crimes especially, (c) *That if the Sin do not only affect the Conscience of the Offender, but hath likewise given Scandal to others, he should cure it by this Medicine;* which was indeed the *Panpharmacon* of the Ancients; and without it they had no Notion of a Cure for any heinous Crime.

Yet one Case at last there was, wherein as *Baptism* was administer'd to adult Persons, without observing or passing thro' the Stage of *Catechumens*; so *Penance* was assign'd and *Absolution* granted, without going thro' the ordinary Stages of the *penitential Discipline*; and this was the imminent Danger of approaching Death. Only *Clinical Baptism* was in no Case deny'd, tho' it was accounted a Fault to defer it, where it might be sooner had; and a Brand was accordingly fix'd upon Persons so baptiz'd, if they afterwards recover'd.

(d) Whereas

(b) See in pag. 82. what is cited from *Ambrose*, Notes a, b.

(c) Ut si peccatum ejus non solum in gravi ejus malo, sed etiam in scandalo est aliorum, atq; hoc expedire utilitati Ecclesie videatur antistiti, in notitiâ multorum vel etiam totius plebis agere pœnitentiam non recuset, non resistat, non lethali & mortiferæ plagæ per pudorem addat tumorem. *Augustin*, in *Homil. ult. ex, 59, cap. 11.*

(d) Whereas St. *Cyprian* will inform us of a Case, wherein he “thought it improper to allow the Peace of the Church, if the Party did then first ask it; and that was the Case of such as would not before submit to Penance, nor manifest their Sorrow for their Sin, ’till a sick Bed and the Fear of Death should extort this Request from them; these he judg’d unfit to receive the Comfort of Communion in their Deaths, who had despis’d it in their Lives.”

“(e) The Council of *Arles* determin’d the same, in the Case of such as had apostatiz’d from the Faith, and never made their penitential Submissions, till visited with some dangerous Distemper, and then would beg a Reconciliation; these were not to be receiv’d, except they recover’d, and did publick Penance.”

“(f) Even when Penance was allow’d to the Clinical (or Sick-bed) Penitent; and when Reconciliation follow’d, he stood bound (upon his Recovery) to comply with the Conditions, upon

(d) Idcirco, frater charissime, poenitentiam non agentes nec dolorem delictorum suorum toto corde & manifestâ lamentationis suæ professione testantes, prohibendos omnino censuimus, à spe communicationis & pacis, si in infirmitate atq; in periculo cœperint deprecari; quia rogare illos non delicti poenitentia, sed mortis urgentis admonitio compellit; nec dignus est in morte accipere solatium, qui se non cogitavit esse moriturum. *Cyprian. in Epist. 52. ad Antonian.*

(e) De his qui apostatant, & nunquam se ad Ecclesiam præsentant, ne quidem poenitentiam agere quærunt, at postea infirmitate correpti petunt communionem, placuit eis non dandam communionem, nisi revaluerint, & egerint fructus dignos poenitentiae. *In 1 Concil. Arelat. Can. 22.*

(f) Si continuò creditur moriturus, reconcilietur per manus impositionem — si supervixerit, subdatur statutis poenitentiae legibus. *In 4 Concil. Carthag. Can. 76.* See likewise in the Appendix *Gregory Nyssen’s Epistle, No. 1.*

“ upon which it was granted him, and to perform it publickly in the Face of the Church.”

“(g) Indeed a Penitent whom Danger of Death should find in a State of Penance, before the Expiration of the Term assign’d him, was in no Case whatever to be deny’d a Reconciliation.”

But then between *Absolution* thus granted upon a regular Submission to *Canonical Discipline*, and that which was granted to the Sick, upon a Presumption, that, if they recover’d they would duly discharge it; (I say between these two Cases) there was this great Difference anciently apprehended, that the one was secure of Pardon, whilst the other was very uncertain of it.

(b) He (saith *Ambrose*) who hath duly perform’d his Penance, and is loos’d from the Bond which held him, and which separated him from the Body of Christ, and who after such his Penance, and such his Absolution, shall lead a godly Life, and then shall happen to die, such an one goes assuredly to God, and to everlasting Rest. But for the Man who shall be admitted to

(g) De his qui in pœnitentiâ positi vitam exceſſerunt, placuit nullum communione vacuum debere dimitti; sed pro eo quod honoravit pœnitentiam, oblatio illius recipiatur. In 2 Concil. Arelat. Can. 12.

(b) Qui egerit veraciter pœnitentiam & solutus fuerit à ligamento quo erat constrictus, & à Christi corpore separatus, & bene post pœnitentiam vixerit, & post reconciliationem defunctus fuerit, ad Dominum vadit, ad requiem vadit. — Qui autem positus in ultimâ necessitate ægritudinis suæ acceperit pœnitentiam, & mox reconciliatus fuerit, & vadit, id est, exit de corpore, fateor vobis, non illi negamus quod petitis, sed non præsumo dicere, quia bene hinc exit. Non præsumo, non polliceor. — Agens vero pœnitentiam ad ultimum, & reconciliatus si exierit, an securus hinc exeat, ego non sum securus. Pœnitentiam dare possum, securitatem dare non possum — Si autem tum agere vis pœnitentiam, quando peccare jam non potes; peccata te dimiserunt, non tu illa. *Ambros. in Exhortat. ad Pœnitent. agend.*

to Terms of Penance in the last Extremities of Life, and after that to Absolution, and shall die in those sad Circumstances, we do not indeed deny to such an one what he asks of us; but it is not because we think well of his Case, for that is what we can no way assure to him. If his Penance be thus deferr'd to his last Moments, tho' he should be absolv'd before his Departure, yet whether such Absolution will prove effectual, we cannot promise him; we may assign him Penance, but we can give no Security for the Success of it. For if he will then only begin to repent, when he can no longer sin; the Construction will be, that his Sins have forsaken him, and not that he hath forsook his Sins.

Even this (we may observe) which seems the only Instance of *Primitive Absolution*, where *publick Penance* had not preceded, did yet stand related to it, and was to be follow'd by it, if the Party were capable; and he was admitted to the one, upon a Presumption, that, if he liv'd, he would perform the other. Tho' want of Proof, or Neglect of Discipline, might have hitherto kept him from it, yet now, upon his Recovery, he was sure to submit to it; or, if he did not recover, the Hope conceiv'd of him was very dubious for his want of it.

For such as had been cut off from the Church, by a Sentence of *Excision*, (whose Case we find mention'd in the (i) Constitutions) it hath already been observ'd, that they were no more regarded than Infidels and Heathens; and therefore the *penitential Discipline* was no way concern'd with them, till a Sense of their Danger had wrought its Effects upon them, and 'till, by their

(i) In Apostol. Constitut. lib. 2. cap. 41. cited in pag. 42 and 43, Note d.

their humble Demeanour, they had obtain'd Admission to some *Station of Penance*. So that they enter no otherwise within our present Consideration, than as their last Sickness might happen to surprize them in this desperate State. And then, by what hath been cited from St. Cyprian, (k) it appears, that neither *Penance* nor *Absolution* was, in those Circumstances, allow'd them.

What St. (l) *James* hath written upon the Case of *Clinicks*, and upon their *sending for the Elders of the Church to pray over them*, and upon their *confessing their Faults one to another*, may, and does probably relate to the *miraculous Cure of Distempers*, and to the *miraculous Gift of Prayer*. Yet this hinders not, but that he might likewise direct, or allude to, the common Practice of *Clinical Penance*. For tho' the *Prayer of Faith* might then have a certain *Efficacy*, to which in *After-times* it was not entituled, yet it might retain in *After-times* an *Usefulness* which might recommend it, in like Circumstances, to succeeding Generations. And tho' it should be granted, that the *Confession of their Faults one to another*, did not necessarily infer the *Confession* of them to a *Priest*; yet considering the Connexion of that with the foregoing Passage, (wherein the *sending for the Elders of the Church*, and their *praying over him*, were recommended to the Sick) considering the Success which is there promis'd to such a Prayer, that the Sins of the Party should thereupon be forgiven; considering, that then it follows in the

(k) See him cited in pag. 107. Note d. *Idcirco, frater charissime, &c.* — Prohibendos omnino censuimus à spe communicationis & pacis, si in infirmitate & periculo cœperint deprecari.

(l) St. *James* 5. 14, 15, 16. *ἑομολογεῖσθε ἑν ἀλλήλοις τοὺς ἁμαρτίας.* See Dr. Hammond upon the Place,

the Royal M. S. *Confess your Sins* therefore to *one another*; and adding moreover to these several Considerations the known Usage of the *penitential Confession*, (which was indeed a *Confession to one another*, i. e. a *Confession in the Face of the Church*) I cannot help understanding St. James as having here in his View the Process of *Clinical Penance*. He hath plainly suppos'd the *Presence* of the *Elders of the Church*, and their *Intercession* to God for the sick Penitent; and then hath recommended the *Confession of his Faults*, in that *Presence*; where two or three *assembled together* in the Name of God, might constitute a Church for that Purpose. And thus his *Confession to* (or in the *Presence of*) *others*, tho' not confin'd to the *Priest alone*, will have much the same Signification, with that *solemn Exomologesis* which was so well afterwards known to be made in the Face of the Church, and to denominate the main *one* Branch of the Penitent's Humiliation.

It hath indeed been insisted, that the Phrase (*to one another*) is to be taken in a *mutual* Signification, and so will imply the *Confession* of the *Persons* then *present* to the *Sick*, as well as the *Confession* of the *Sick* to the *Persons* present. But the Phrase may be allow'd to retain its *mutual* Construction, without any such Inference; and St. James may be understood in a Sense like this which follows: *Therefore, upon the foregoing Considerations, I advise your Resort to this penitential Confession of your Faults in the Presence of one another, whenever any of you shall be visited with Sickness.*

According to St. James, the Course was therefore this: Some *Elder* of the Church was to be *call'd for*, and was to *offer up* the Prayers of the *Persons* then present, on the Behalf of the *Sick*; who,

who, for his own Part, was here exhorted to *confess* his Sins in the Presence of that Elder, and of the other By-Standers. And thus all in their Turns were to *confess their Faults to each other*, and to join in Prayer for each other, whenever this Occasion should call them to it.

These Passages are all apparently connected, and have a mutual Relation. And the whole Process of this Affair, as here represented, was exactly agreeable to the Practice which afterwards succeeded. Nor is there any Thing extraordinary in the Passage of St. James, which was not afterwards adopted into the *standing Usages* of the Church, except only what related to the *miraculous Cure of the Distemper*.

But now as in the Case of Excommunication, the Practice remain'd after the Age of the Apostles, tho' the supernatural Punishments which at first attended it, did no longer follow it; so here it might probably be in the Case of *Clinical Penance*. The *Usage* it self might be, and was, *continu'd*, altho' the *miraculous Cure* was *discontinu'd*.

What Mr. Le (11) Clerc hath hereupon asserted of the Insignificancy of an Elder's Prayers, and of Absolution by the Church, will conclude alike against divers Scripture-Instances, and against all the Ordinances of the Gospel; and indeed will make Sacraments, or no Sacraments, Censures, or no Censures, to be equally significant. And therefore, if the proving too much, proves nothing at all, Mr. Le Clerc hath here betray'd his *Logick* and his *Religion* together.

I have but one Thing further to observe upon

(11) See him in his Supplement to Dr. Hammond, on the 15th and 16th Verses of St. James's 5th Chapter.

this whole Discipline, which hath been occasionally, though not of Set-purpose, prov'd, throughout the main Tenor of the foregoing Argument, viz. That *solemn Penance*, and *Abso-*
n from it, were originally allow'd but once. What hath been cited from (m) *Hermas*, evidently proves, that to the *Servants of God*, there but one Repentance.

(m m) *Tertullian* hath likewise inform'd us, that was granted but once; and hath given us recover the Reason of that *Restraint*, viz. That Door of Penitence was therefore but once open because that of Baptism had already been so to Purpose; so that the penitential Admission was to esteem'd a second.

(n) As one Baptism, so one Penance, saith *Am-*
se. But *Augustin* to *Macedonius* is so full up- this, that I shall dismiss the Point, when I ve given my Reader his Representation of the se at large.

(o) Some (saith he) proceed so far in Wicked-
 s, that after they have been admitted to publick
 nance, and have been solemnly reconcil'd at the
 tar of God, yet do they run again into the same,
 even into grosser Crimes, which however hinders
 not.

(m) See him in pag. 29. Note t, u.

(m m) See him cited in pag. 81. Note z.

(n) See him cited in pag. 82. Note b.

(o) In tantum autem hominum aliquando iniquitas pro-
 editur, ut etiam post actam poenitentiam, post altaris re-
 conciliationem, vel similia vel graviora committant; & ta-
 men Deus facit etiam super tales oriri solem suum, nec mi-
 nus tribuit quam antè tribuebat, largissima munera vitæ ac-
 clutis. Et quamvis eis in Ecclesiâ locus humillimæ poeni-
 tentiæ non concedatur, Deus tamen super eos suæ patientiæ
 non obliviscitur. Ex quorum numero si quis nobis dicat;
 aut date mihi iterum eundem poenitendi locum, aut despera-
 um me permittite, ut faciam quicquid libuerit, quantum
 meis

not the Flow of God's common Blessings upon them. And tho' the Church allows them no Place for that solemn Penance, which they have already frustrated, yet does God still bear with them. Now, if one of this Number should say to us Bishops, either admit me again to Penance, or allow me to be desperate, and to commit all Manner of Wickedness which is in my Power, and which brings me not within the Reach of Human Laws; or if you will not indulge me in this, inform me at least whether upon my Contempt of this World, with all its Allurements; upon a severe Restraint and Check of my Passions; upon the Assiduity of my Prayers, and Alms, and Tears, I shall be able, e'er a Whit, to better my future Condition? Which of us all would here be so mad, as to discourage such a Man from his good Purposes, or allow him in his Indulgences to a sensual Life? Therefore tho' it be a wise and wholsom Appointment of the Church

meis opibus adjuvor, & humanis legibus non prohibeor; in scortis omniq; luxuriâ, damnabili quidem apud Dominum, sed apud homines plerosq; etiam laudabili. Aut si me ab hac nequitia revocatis, dicite utrum mihi aliquid proffit ad vitam futuram, si in istâ vitâ illecebrosissimæ voluptatis blandimenta contempsero, si libidinum incitamenta frænaverò, si ad castigandum corpus meum multa mihi etiam licita & concessa subtraxero, si me pœnitendo vehementius quàm prius excitavero, si miserabilius ingemuero, si flevero uberiùs, si vixero meliùs, si pauperes sustentavero largiùs, si charitate, quæ operit multitudinem peccatorum flagravero ardentius; quis nostrum ita desipit, ut huic homini dicat, nihil tibi ista proderunt in posterum, vade saltem, hujus vitæ suavitate perfruere? Avertat Deus tam immanem sacrilegamq; dementiam! Quamvis ergò cautè salubriterq; provisum sit, ut locus illius humillimæ pœnitentiæ semel in Ecclesiâ concedatur, ne medicina vilis minùs utilis esset ægrotis, quæ tantò magis salubris est, quantò minùs contemptibilis fuerit: Quis tamen audeat dicere Deo, Quare huic homini, qui post primam pœnitentiam rursus se laqueis iniquitatis obstringit, adhuc iterum parcis? *Augustin, in Epist. ad Macedonium.* No. 54.

ch to allow but once the Benefits of solemn Fe-
re, lest it should bring Contempt upon the Medi-
and so should render it the less beneficial; yet
will thence venture to say to God, why dost thou
spare the Man, who after having been once admit-
to Pardon, involves himself afresh in the Guilt of

This is so full to our Purpose, that it needs no
nment, and accordingly I shall leave it with
Reader to make his *own* upon it.

When the Concurrence therefore was in this
nt so general, (p) *Socrates* might well set a
nd upon *Chrysostom* for flying in the Face of it,
l for encouraging his People to expect Admissi-
n to Penance (*toties quoties*) as often as they
uld offend. For tho' much of this Discipline
s intrusted to the Bishops with a discretionary
wer, yet where one and the same Rule of Ad-
ministration was universally agreed to, it did not
ok so well in any single Bishop to depart from
and to set up his *own particular* against the ge-
al Practice of *all* his Collegues.

I have now, as briefly as I could, represented
my Reader what were the *constituent Parts* of
e old *penitential Discipline*, and have endea-
our'd to support the Account I have given of
ch, with its proper Vouchers.

If in any Thing I have either *mis-led* him, or
all prove to be my self *mistaken*, no one shall
e more ready to retract the Error, nor to beg his
xcuse for having drawn him into it.

I

I would

(p) Μᾶλλον γὰρ μετὰ τὸ βῆμα πρὸς τὴν Συνόδον ἢς ὁπι-
κόπων Μετανοίας τοῖς ἐπὶ αἰκοῖσι δοθείσης, αὐτὸς ἀπελόμενος
πέν, χιλιάκις μετάνοίας εἰσελθε Socrat. in Histor. lib.
cap. 21.

I would only bespeak the Forbearance of those, who have not yet thought fit to travail so far as I have done into this Argument, that they would not too severely animadvert upon any little Oversight; nor too hastily *censure*, what, as yet, they may not have enough *consider'd*.

P A R T II.

THE Question which lies next before us to be discuss'd, relates, (1.) to the Crimes for which this Discipline was inflicted; and, (2.) to the Hands, with which the Ministration (or Execution) of it was intrusted.

SECT. I. *Of the Crimes for which this Discipline was inflicted.*

Now for such as were privately confess'd, the (q) Penitentiary (we have seen) was to judge, whether it would be fit to acknowledge them, and to do Penance for them in the Face of the Church.

But such as gave *publick Scandal*, were, I conceive, in the Design of the Institution, the chief Objects of this Discipline, tho' what were either *privately confess'd*; or came to the Notice of the Ecclesiastical

(q) See *Basil. Canonic. Epist. to Ambilochius*, Can. 34. where some Crimes were conceal'd, to avoid the Mischief which might attend the Publication of them, cited in pag. 74. Note m. as likewise what is cited from *Origen* in pag. 44, 45, 46. Note g.

Si intellexerit & praverit talem esse languorem tuum, qui in conventu totius Ecclesiæ exponi debeat & curari.

Ecclesiastical Judge by Information from others, and likewise fall under its Cognisance, as well as the more scandalous and notorious Crimes.

The Reader will observe from the Canonical Epistle of (r) *Gregory Nyssen*, (which contains indeed an Abridgement of the Discipline in his age obtaining) how Sins were ranged, into what classes divided, and how they fell under *judicial Notice*.

They were generally reduced to three common Topicks, and under these, all, or most Offences were rang'd, which were thought necessary to be expiated by publick Penance.

For as to other Crimes, the daily Sacrifice of Prayer, join'd with more Circumspection for the future, was thought a sufficient Cure for them.

(s) *Some Sins (saith Ambrose) may be released by mere Supplication to God in that Petition of our daily Prayer, Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.*

(t) *Pacian*, in like manner, tells us, that other sins were cur'd by a due Diligence in better Practice; but that these three great and capital Offences were to be dreaded as the Blast of a Basilisk, or as a Cup of Poison, or as a deadly Wound.

In short, as (u) *Augustin* hath observ'd, the sins from which no Man's Life was or could in our present

(r) See it translated in the Appendix, No. 1.

(s) Si alia peccata habuerit, quæ quotidie dimittantur in oratione dicenti, dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut & nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. *Ambros. in Exhort. ad Pœnitent.*

(t) Reliqua peccata meliorum operum compensatione curantur; hæc vero tria crimina, ut basilisci alicujus afflatus, ut veneni calix, ut lethalis arundo, metuenda sunt. *Pacian. in Parænes. ad Pœnitent.*

(u) De quotidianis autem brevibus levibusq; peccatis, sine quibus hæc vita non ducitur, quotidiana oratio fidelium satisfacit. *August. in Enchirid. ad Laurentin.*

present State, be exempted, in other Words, the Sins of mere Surprize and Frailty, were allow'd to pass without Discipline or Censure; but every Crime which gave Scandal, and was esteem'd as an Instance of deliberate and wilful Guilt; every deadly Sin, which *excluded from Heaven*, had its *Bond upon Earth*, and fell under *publick* Cognisance, when any way prov'd, either by the Confession of the Party, or by other Evidence.

In every *Species* of mortal Sin, as well as in each *Instance* wherein it was committed, there was doubtless a just Distinction founded, in regard both to the Nature and Quality of the Offence it self, and to the Inducements and Circumstances from whence it sprung, and wherewith it was cloath'd. And these had due Consideration severally allow'd them, in the Extent and Measure of the Discipline assign'd them. But the Distinction fram'd by (v) *Morinus*, between *mortal Sins* of a *more or less heinous Nature*, the one of which he would suggest to have been the Object of *private and sacramental*, as the other of *publick and canonical Penance*; this was intirely a Fiction of *modern standing*, and invented for the Support of the *modern Practice* in the *Roman Church*, since *Antiquity* is altogether a Stranger to it, as well as to the Practice, in Aid of which it was invented.

The Crimes then, for which Penance was assign'd to the Party who had committed them, fell under one of these three Denominations, or else were reducible to one of these; viz. (w) *Uncleanness, Idolatry, and Bloodshed*; and these did indeed

(v) Vid. Morin. de Pœnitent. lib. 1. cap. 10. §. 12. cited in pag. 94. Note m.

(w) Mœchia, Idololatria, & Homicidium.

indeed very aptly point to the three great branches of Duty respecting God, our Neighbour, and our selves.

Some Churches (it must be own'd) there were of ancient standing, which deny'd to one or other of these Offences, the Privilege of *Penance*, or at least of *Reconciliation*; witness what we find determin'd in various Canons of the Council of *Eliberis*, (which was celebrated, in all likelihood, before the *Dioclesian* Persecution) whereby (x) two of the three great Crimes did utterly debar the offenders from Communion to the End of their lives; tho' as to the third, (*viz.* that of Unchastity) some Distinction was made in the kinds of it, as may be seen from (y) the 12, 13, 14, and 71 Canons of the foremention'd Council.

I 3

“ St.

(x) Placuit ut quicumq; post fidem baptismi salutaris, adultæ ætate, ad templum idololatraturus accesserit, & fecerit hoc est crimen capitale (quia est summum scelus) nec in fine eum ad communionem accipere. *In Concil. Eliber. Can. 1.*

Delator si quis extiterit fidelis, & per delationem ejus alius fuerit proscriptus vel interfectus, placuit nec in fine accipere communionem. *ibid. in Can. 73.*

(y) Mater vel parentes, vel quælibet fidelis, si lenocinium præcuerit, eò quod alienum vendiderit corpus, vel porius sanguinem, placuit eam nec in fine accipere communionem. *ibid. Can. 12.*

Virgines quæ se Deo dedicaverunt, si pacta perdiderint virginis, atq; eidem libidini inservierint, non intelligentes si amiserint, placuit nec in fine dandam eis esse communionem. Quod si semetipsas pœnituerint, & toto tempore vite suæ egerint pœnitentiam, placuit eas in fine communionem accipere debere. *ibid. in Can. 13.*

Virgines quæ virginitatem suam non custodierint, si eos qui eas violaverunt acceperint & invenerint maritos, post unius anni pœnitentiam reconciliari debebunt. *ibid. in Can. 14.*

Stupratoribus puerorum nec in fine dandam esse communionem. *ibid. in Can. 71.*

“ St. *Cyprian* (z.) mentions the like Severity in some of his Predecessors, as to the Case of *Uncleanness*, tho’ he seems to think that they had no general Concurrence with them in such their Opinion. He observes however that this Diversity of Sentiment made no Rupture, but that those who allow’d, and those who disallow’d of Communion in such Cases, bore with each other, and did not, thro’ the Obstinacy of their different Apprehensions, disturb the Peace, or break the Unity of the Church.

They did not (like *Nevatus*) deny the Power of the Church to forgive even in *these* Cases; altho’ for *Discipline’s* sake, they did not think fit in certain Instances to use that Power; so that where this Rigour obtain’d, it was (a) *not thro’ an Apprehension* (as *Augustin* speaks in a like Example) *that the Facts themselves were unpardonable, but from the Severity of the* (then prevailing) *Discipline.*

In the Council of *Ancyra* (held not long after that of *Eliberis*, viz. in or about the Year 315.) the Case was apparently much alter’d, and Communion was granted after Penance, to those very Crimes, in which the Council of *Eliberis* had a little before deny’d it. Nay, it was granted to those Crimes in their very worst Aggravations.

(b) *To*

(z) Apud antecessores nostros quidam de episcopis istic in provinciâ nostrâ dandam pacem mœchis non putaverunt, & in totum pœnitentiæ locum contra adulteria clauferunt; non tamen à cœpiscoporum suorum collegio recesserunt, aut catholicæ Ecclesiæ unitatem vel duritiæ vel censuræ suæ obstinatione ruperunt, ut quia apud alios adulteris pax dabatur, qui non dabat de Ecclesiâ separaretur. *Cyprian. in Epist. ad Antonian. No. 52.*

(a) Non desperatione indulgentiæ, sed rigore factum est disciplina. *August. in Epist. ad Bonifac. No. 50.*

) To such (for Instance) as had not only sacrific'd Idols in their own Persons, but had been instrumental likewise in compelling others to do so too: (c) To such as should offend in the most enormous Acts of Unchastity; and even (d) to such as should commit heinous Murder, it allows Communion in their last moments.

So that Communion doth never appear to have been so generally deny'd, even in these three cases, as Sirmondus with some other learned Men *hath* thought.

Tertullian not only allows, but objects the Fact, when yet, as a Montanist, he disputes the Right by the Church then claim'd, to remit even these, the most heinous of all Offences.

(e) You will forgive (says he) the Idolater and the Apostate, because you find (forsooth) the People of Israel were forgiven after they had been so. In like manner you will pardon Bloodshed, because Ahab found Mercy, after spilling that of Naboth; and

I 4

because

(b) ὁ μὴ μόνον ἐξελυσίως τεθνηκώς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑτέρον ἀναγκαίως δεκαετίαν ὑποπνίγεται. In Synod. Ancyran. Can. 9.

(c) Περὶ τῆς ἀλογασίας, ἥ καὶ ἀλογασίας ὅσοι περιέκοσμεται γενέσθαι, ἡμαρτίαν — ἐξελυσίως αὐτῆς ὅ ἐν τῇ ὑποπνίγεται βίῳ, καὶ ὅπως τυγχάνεται τῆς φιλικῆς ἡμετέρας. ibid. in Can. 16.

Περὶ ἐκείνων φόνων, ὑποπνίγεται μὲν, τῷ δὲ τελείῳ ἐν τῷ τῆς βίῳ καταξίωσιν. ibid. in Can. 23.

(d) Vide Sirmond. Opuscul. Tom. 3. Histor. Pœnitent. public. cap. 1.

(e) Dabis ergo idololatriæ & omni apostatæ veniam, quia & populum ipsum, totiens reura istorum, totiens invenimus retrò restitutum. Communicabis & homicidæ, quia & Nabothæ sanguinem Achab deprecatione delēvit; & David Uriæ cadem cum causâ ejus mœchia confessione purgavit. Jam & incesta donabis propter Loth, & fornicationes cum incesto, propter Judam, & turpes de prostitutione nuptias. Tertull. de Pudicit. cap. 6.

because David by confessing his Guilt, when he had join'd Adultery to Murder in the Affair of Uriah, had his Sin blotted out. Thus also from the Examples of Lot and Judah, you will plead Precedents for remitting the Sins of Incest and Fornication, and of Marriage obtain'd by a vile Prostitution.

He rehearses here, and objects, to the Church her Allowance of Reconciliation to the three great Crimes; so that there can be no doubt of their being in his Time and Country admitted to it.

(f) The Apostolical Canons are very clear in the Case, and appoint the Bishop or Presbyter to be degraded, who should refuse to receive a Penitent, without naming or suggesting any reserv'd Case, wherein they should not receive him. They assign such Clergy-men to Segregation, as thro' Fear of temporal Inconveniences should deny the Name of Christ, and admit them, upon their Repentance to Lay-Communion. The Canon preceding, hath forbidden any Person being ever promoted to the Clerical Order, who should be accus'd and convict of Adultery, Fornication, or of any the like prohibited Enormities. A needless Prohibition surely! had those Crimes debarr'd the Party convict from all Approaches to Lay-Communion for his whole Life! since there could have been no Danger, (and therefore, upon this Supposal, no need of

(f) "Εἰ τις ἐπίσκοπος ἢ Πρεσβύτερος τὸ ἐπιστρέφοντα ἀπο αἵμαρτίας ἐ' παρορθεῖν, ἀλλ' ἀποβάλλειν, καὶ παύσειν. In Canon. Apostol. Can. 44.

"Εἰ τις κληρικός διὰ φόβον ἀντρέψινον ἀρνήσεται τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου, ἀφορμήσει. *ibid.* in Can. 54.

"Εἰ τις κατηγορεῖται ἡμῶν περὶ πορνείας, ἢ μοιχείας, ἢ ἄλλης τινὸς ἀπηνόρμου μὲν πρᾶξεως, καὶ ἐλεγχθῆναι, εἰς κληρονομίαν παύσειν. *ibid.* in Can. 53.

Caution) that such should ever have risen to Order of Clergy, who stood restrain'd from all proaches to *Lay-Communion*.

(ff) What hath been cited from St. *Irenæus*, in third Section of the preceding Chapter, clear-evidences, that two of these three great Offices (*viz.* those of Uncleanness and Apostacy) were in his Time admitted to *publick Penance*. For such was indeed the complicated Crime, both the Deacon's Wife, and of the other Women are mention'd, as seduced by *Marcus*. But then must be own'd, that he gives no express Account of their Reconciliation; tho' where he imputes their being *neither directly in the Church, nor quite out of it*, to their *Irresolution* and *wavering* in their Submission to Discipline, he seems to intimate, that if they had not been so *wavering* and *resolute* they might have been *restor'd*.

(g) *Gregory*, surnam'd *Thaumaturgus*, hath written a Canonical Epistle, in the seventh Canon of which, as rang'd by our late most learned and pious Bishop *Beveridge*, he hath left it to the discretion of the Parties "concern'd in the Reconciliation of Murderers, whether they should be restor'd or not;" and yet by his manner of Expression it should seem, that he was himself inclinable to the merciful Side. "They were to have no Access, *till* somewhat should be determin'd in common concerning them." The case was, of such as had been instrumental to the Death of their Brethren, upon the IncurSIONS of the Barbarians. And this Point was to be settled,

(ff) See what is cited from St. *Irenæus* in pag. 33. Note 7.

(g) Ἐκ βαρβαρῶν θέντας δὲ ὡς καὶ φονέαντες τοὺς ὁμοφυλοὺς ἢ ζύλους, ἀγχοῦνται, ἀποδεικνύνται δὲ ἢ ὁδοὺς ἢ οἰκίας ἀγνοῦσι τοῖς βαρβάρους, καὶ τὴν ἀποστάσεως ἀπειροῦνται δεῖ, μέλλουσιν κοινῇ πρὸς αὐτοὺς δοῦναι. *Gregor. Thaumaturg. Canonic. Epist. Can. 7.*

settled, when Peace was restor'd to the Churches, which had been thus disturb'd by them.

(gg) St. Cyprian was so clear in the Case of those who had laps'd into Idolatry during the Rage of Persecutions, that there can be no doubt of his Opinion in that Matter. And tho' we do not find him so express upon the two other Crimes, yet from what hath been cited out of him, where he mentions the *Practice of some of his Predecessors*, with a Note of their having differ'd from the Usage of his own Time, for that they *did not allow of Reconciliation, to the Sin of Uncleanness*; I think we may fairly gather, that it was his own Usage to allow it. It is moreover certain, that he look'd upon (h) *Faults, which were not committed directly against God, to be of a lower Class, and of a less heinous Nature, than others*, in which the Honour of God was more immediately concern'd. So did (i) Gregory Nyssen after him. If therefore the *more heinous were remitted*, we may well conclude, that the *less heinous were not then esteem'd irremissible*.

(k) Ambrose speaks fully to our present Purpose, where he tells the Novatians, that, *If they had only excepted one single Crime from Pardon, however in this they might have determin'd harshly, and would have contradicted the Scriptures by such an Assertion, yet would they have been consistent with themselves*

(g g) See him cited in pag. 118. Note 2.

(h) In minoribus delictis quæ non in Dominum committuntur, poenitentia agitur justo tempore, — quanto magis in his gravissimis atq; extremis delictis! Cyprian. in Epist. 11.

(i) See Gregory's Canonic. Epist. in Append. No. 1.

(k) Si unum tantum crimen exciperent, durè quidem, sed tamen divinis tantum redargui viderentur sententiis, assertionibus tamen suis convenirent. Dominus enim crimen nullo exceptit, qui peccata donavit omnia. Ambros. de Penitent. lib. 1. cap. 1.

lives in it. For that God indeed had excepted no time from Pardon, but had extended alike his Forbearance to all the Instances of Sin.

Whatever then might be the Opinion or the Practice of a few particular Churches, the general Usage (as far as we can trace it) seems to have allowed Communion to all Sins, upon a due Submission to the Penance assign'd them. And the very Sins which have been mention'd, were so far from being excepted out of this Pardon, that they were only, or such as were reducible to them by way of a just Analogy, were esteem'd to want and to require it.

We have seen from *Pacian*, that other Sins (except these three) were thought in his Time (1) sufficiently expiated by a future Diligence in good Works.

But then indeed all the Sins of the *Flesh*, which were committed with any sort of Deliberation, were reduc'd to the Head of *Mæchia*, as those against God were to that of *Idolatry*, and those against Society to that of *Homicide*.

So that from these three *Roots* there arose numerous *Branches* of Sin, to be expiated by publick Penance, wherever there was any Aggravation to raise the Fact above common Frailty.

(m) *Augustin would have all Resort to the Bishop for*

(1) See him cited in pag. 115. Note c.

(m) *Judicet ergo seipsum homo in istis voluntate dum potest; & mores convertat in melius, ne cum jam non poterit, etiam præter voluntatem à Domino judicetur. Et cum in se protulerit severissimæ medicinæ sententiam, veniat ad Antistites, per quos illi in Ecclesiâ claves ministrantur; & tanquam bonus incipiens jansse filius maternorum membrorum ordine custodito, à præpositis sacrorum accipiat satisfactionis suæ modum; ut in offerendo sacrificio cordis contribulati devotus & supplex id tamen agat, quod non solum illi prosit ad recipiendam salutem, sed etiam cæteris ad Exemplum. Augustin. in Homil. ult. ex. 50.*

for publick Penance, who had whereof to accuse themselves in any of the Instances nam'd by the Apostle, (Galat. 5. 20, 21.) as Sins of the Flesh: Such as Adultery, Fornication, Uncleaness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like.

In short, it was the Endeavour of the Church, (as (n) Origen tells us) that, as far as might be, her Assemblies should consist of none, but of discreet and sober Members; and therefore such as acted unsuitably to that Character, and were known to do so, had a Mark set upon them by publick Censure; under which they continu'd, 'till their Reformation was as visible as their Offence had been.

There now remains but one Thing farther to be consider'd in this Chapter, which we will proceed to discuss in the following Section.

SECT. II. In whose Hands the Ministration or Execution of this Discipline was lodged?

To this Question the Answer is short and clear, that the Bishop was the Person intrusted with it; that his Powers were discretionary, (as the various Practices of various Churches sufficiently prove) and that all Authority in these Matters was originally deriv'd from him, whoever might occasionally be allow'd to exercise it under him.

St. Ignatius hath divers Passages, declaring the great Authority of the Bishop in this and every other Matter relating to the Church of Christ.

(o) God

(n) ἡμεῖς γὰρ ὅση δυνάμεις, πάντα προἰτοῦμεν, ὑπὲρ τοῦ κοινῶν ἀνδρῶν γενέσθαι τὸ συνέλογον ἡμῶν. Origen. contra Celsum. lib. 3.

(o) God (says he) extends his Pardon to all Penitents, if they come with one Accord into the Unity of Christ, and into the same Consistory with the Bishop; or whoever do really belong to Christ, are in Fellowship and Communion with the Bishop; but whoever depart from him, and join with the Children of Perdition, shall be cut off from the Body of Christ. Again, — it is fit we should walk more circumspectly for the future; and whilst we have Time, we should turn to God Repentance: We then are safe, when we recognize God, and his Minister the Bishop, [in this solemn Action.] He that honours the Bishop, shall be honoured by God. He that doth any Thing clandestinely without the Bishop, serves the Devil. Again, Let no one presume to do any Thing in Church-matters, separately from the Bishop. Let that be deem'd a firm and valid Eucharistical Sacrifice, which perform'd either by the Bishop himself, or by Persons Commission from him. It is not lawful to baptize, or to celebrate the holy Communion, separately from the Bishop, [or without his Authority.] What Tertullian hath observ'd of Baptism, and its

(o) Παῖσιν ἐν τοῖς Μετανοήσιν ἀφίησιν ὁ Θεός, ἐὰν Συνδρα-
 σιν εἰς ἐνότητά Χριστοῦ, καὶ Συνεδρεῖαν τῷ ὁπισκόπῳ. ὅσοι γὰρ
 μετ' εἰσιν, ἔτι μετὰ τῷ ὁπισκόπῳ. ὅσοι δ' ἂν ἐκκληνώσιν αὐ-
 τῷ καὶ κοινωνίαν ἀσπασάσθαι μετὰ τῆς κατήχουμένης, ἔτι Συν-
 τοῖς ἐκκοπήσονται. Ignat. ad Philadelph.

Εὐλογόν ἔστι λοιπὸν ἀναγῆναι, καὶ ὡς ἔτι καιρὸν ἔχομεν εἰς
 τὸν μετανεῖν. καλῶς ἔχει Θεὸν καὶ ὁπίσκοπον εὐδέναι. ὁ τι-
 μὸς ὁπίσκοπον ὑπὸ Θεοῦ τετίμηται. ὁ λαὸς τοῦ ὁπισκόπου τι-
 μωσάντων, τῇ Διαβολῇ λαβράει. §. 9. — Μηδεὶς χωρὶς τῷ ὁπι-
 σκόπῳ τι πράσσειν τῆς ἀντηκούσας εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ὁκείνη βίβλια
 καὶ εὐχισία ἡγεῖσθαι ἢ ὑπὸ τῷ ὁπίσκοπον ἔσθαι, ἢ ὃ ἂν αὐτὸς ὁπι-
 σκόπος — ἐκ Θεοῦ ἔστι χωρὶς τῷ ὁπισκόπῳ ἔτε βαπτίζεσθαι ἔτε
 ἀπὸν ποιεῖν. §. 8. in Epist. ad Smyrn. ibid.

its Minister, that the (p) chief Priest (or Bishop) had the sole Power of it vested in him, and that it was deriv'd from him to others; the same (we shall be inform'd elsewhere) belongs to the Bishop, in the Case of Penance; and tho' St. Cyprian allow'd some Agency in it to (q) Deacons in Cases of Necessity, yet he and others will agree in ascribing to the Bishop, the Original and Fountain of all Ecclesiastical Authority.

(r) *Tertullian* where he ridicules the Action, yet speaks of it plainly as perform'd by the Bishop; and the Council of *Eliberis* (s) expressly reserves it to him, or to his Order and Appointment; in the Steps of which, the second (t) Council of *Carthage* exactly treads, where "the Presbyter, who, in the Bishop's Absence, should be permitted to reconcile a Penitent in Danger of Death, was yet to consult the Bishop upon it, to acquaint him with the Case in its several Circumstances, and thereupon to receive his Directions."

But

(p) Dandi quidem (Baptismum) jus habet summus sacerdos qui est Episcopus: Dehinc Presbyteri & Diaconi, non tamen sine Episcopi autoritate. *Tertull. de Baptismo.*

(q) Si presbyter repertus non fuerit, & urgere exitus coeperit, apud Diaconum quoq; Exomologesin facere delicti sui possunt; ut manu eis in poenitentia imposita veniant ad Dominum eum pace. *Cyprian. in Epist. 12.*

(r) Inq; eum hominis exitum quantis potes misericordiae illecebris bonus Pastor, & *Benedictus Papa* concionaris. *Tertull. de Pudicit. cap. 13.*

(s) Apud Presbyterum, si quis gravi lapsu in ruinam mortis inciderit, placuit agere poenitentiam non debere, sed potius apud Episcopum: cogente tamen infirmitate, necesse est Presbyterum communionem prestare debere, & Diaconum si eum jusserit Episcopus. *In Concil. Eliber. Can. 32.*

(t) Si quisquam in periculo fuerit constitutus, & se reconciliari divinis altaribus perierit, si Episcopus absens fuerit, debet utiq; Presbyter consulere Episcopum, & sic periclitantem ejus praecepto reconciliare. *In 2 Concil. Carthag. Can. 4.*

But St. Cyprian will give us in this Matter the rarest and the fullest Evidence; he will shew that whatever Regard he might sometimes pay to the Tickets of Martyrs or Confessors, or the Intercessions of the People, or to the Counsel and Authority of his Presbyters, yet that the final Power and authoritative Determination he look'd to be solely in himself. “(u) He decides the Case by himself, about which his Presbyters and Deacons had writ to him in his Absence, as to the Reconciliation of the Lapsed in Time of Persecution. He pays indeed a very great Regard to the Intercessions of Martyrs, and grants to those who had obtain'd Tickets from them an earlier Restoration, than to the rest who had none. But still he talks like a Person, who would indeed advise with his Clergy, and pay some Regard to his People, and yet would at last determine what he should find in his own Judgment to be most expedient.”

“His Presbyters had writ to him for a Rule to proceed by, and he clearly by himself determines, that such as could produce Tickets from the Martyrs, should be receiv'd immediately upon

(u) Quoniam tamen significastis quosdam immoderatos esse, communicationem accipiendam festinanter urgere; & desiderastis in hac re formam à me vobis dari, satis plenè respondisse me ad hanc rem proximis literis ad vos factis credo; qui libellum à Martyribus acceperunt, & auxilio eorum variari apud Dominum in delictis suis possunt, si premi inimitate aliquà & periculo coeperint, exomologesi factâ, & cum eis à vobis in poenitentia impositâ, cum pace à Martyribus sibi promissâ ad Dominum remittantur. Cæteri vero qui nullo libello à Martyribus accepto invidiam faciunt; non paucorum, nec Ecclesiæ unius aut unius Provinciae, sed totius orbis hæc causa est, expectent de Domini clementia Ecclesiæ ipsius publicam pacem. *Cyprian. ad Clericum. Epist. No. 13.*

upon their penitential Submissions, and that the rest should stay till it should please God to restore publick Peace to the Church."

This was a Way of Proceeding, which evidently declar'd him to have been Master of the Case, and to have had in himself the sole Power of deciding it.— We may infer the same from his Complaint to (v) *Cornelius*, "of the Envy and Odium he had contracted, by admitting some Persons to Communion, *against the Consent and Will of his People*, who had prov'd afterwards incorrigible, and broken the Promises they had made to him of Reformation." He speaks all along like a Man who was to govern that whole Affair, tho' he would be determin'd in it by various Motives, and by Perswasions from others, if they should appear to him to be reasonable, It was fit indeed, that in (w) *Cases of Scandal*, wherein the *Community* might be interested, the *Community* should be consulted; yet so, as not always

(v) Quibusdam enim aut crimina sua ita obsistunt, aut fratres obstinatè & firmiter renituntur, ut recipi omnino non possint, cum scandalo & periculo plurimorum. Neq; enim sic putamina quædam colligenda sunt, ut quæ integra & sana sunt vulnerentur, nec utilis aut consultus est Pastor qui ita morbidas & contactas oves gregi admiscet, ut gregem totum mali cohærentis afflictatione contamineet. O! si posses, frater charissimæ, istic interesse nobiscum, cum pravi isti & perversi de schismate revertuntur! videres quis mihi labor sit, per-suadere patientiam fratribus nostris, ut animi dolore sopito recipiendis malis curandisq; consentiant — vix plebi per-suadeo, imo extorqueo ut tales patiantur admitti; & justior tactus est fraternitatis dolor, ex quo unus atq; alius *obnitente iube & contradicente, meâ tamen facilitate suscepti*, peiores ex-iterunt, quàm prius fuerant; nec fidem poenitentiae servare potuerunt, quia nec cum verâ poenitentia venerant. *Cyprian. in Epist. ad Cornelium. No. 55.*

(w) A primordio Episcopatus mei statuerim nihil sine consilio vestro, & sine consensu plebis, meâ privatim sententiâ ferere. *Cyprian. in Epist. 5.*

ways to be allow'd a Negative. From what hath been cited, we may observe, that St. Cyprian *mitted some to Communion, without and against the consent of his People; to whole Opinion and Resist,* he was however, in the main, desirous of giving all possible Observance.

He expostulates (in his 11th Epistle) (x) upon *Dis honour he receiv'd, and the Affront which cast upon his Office, by such Presbyters as had sum'd to reconcile certain Offenders without his concurrence. He charges them with forgetting the es of the Gospel, as well as the Honour of his ir; since (as he insists in the preceding Letter (y) it ought not to have been done, 'till he could e met his Clergy, and have concerted the Case b them.*

Accordingly we find one (z) Caldonius, a Presbyter of his, consulting him upon the Point of conciling Offenders, *as one who would not pre- to do it without his Bishop; and St. Cyprian, in Answer (a) commends his Conduct.*

Indeed the whole Strain of that glorious Mar- s Epistles, does so clearly and fully assert Bishop's Authority in that Affair, and the necessity of waiting for his Determination, (let byters, or People, or Martyrs, or Confessors,

K interpose

) Audio quosdam de Presbyteris nec Evangelii memores nec Episcopo honorem sacerdotii sui, & cathedræ referres, jam cum lapsis communicare cœpisse. Cyprian. in E-
11.

) Cum persecutione finitâ convenire in unum cum clero, colligi cœperimus. Ibid. in Epist. 10.

) Quamvis mihi videantur debere pacem accipere, tamen ad consultum vestrum eos dimisi, ne videar aliquid temè præsumere. Caldonius Cypriano, in Epist. No. 18. apud Cyprian.

) Accepimus literas tuas satis sobrias — Cautè omnia consulte geris. Cyprian. in Respons. ad prior. Epist. No. 19.

interpose with never so much Vehemence) that there is no Room to doubt either of his *Opinion* in it, or of the *Practice* which prevail'd in the Age he liv'd in.

He was for paying them all as much *Deference* as he could; but ever with a *Salvo* to the Honour of his Chair. (b) *It is our Business*, (says he to Pope Stephanus) *who are Governors of the Church, to look to its Discipline.*

The *Constitutions* are all directed to the Bishop, and do suppose him the chief Ecclesiastical Officer in all the Business of the Church.

(c) *Let the Bishop* (say they) *superintend over all*; they exhort him moreover to *consider his own Dignity, as one entrusted with the Power of Binding and Loosing*. He is the Person blam'd by them, for neglecting to separate Offenders, as (d) *thereby infecting his whole Diocess*. All manifest and full Assertions of his sole Authority! which extended in *those Days* much further, than will easily in *these* be allow'd or credited by the Libertines and Scepticks of the present Generation.

(e) *You sustain*, (say they) *O Bishop, the Place and Character of God amongst Men, as presiding over*

(b) Cui rei nostrum est consulere, & subvenire, frater charissime, qui — Gubernandæ Ecclesiæ libram tenentes, censuræ vigoris peccatoribus exhibemus. *ibid. in Epist. 67.*

(c) Πάντων ἐν φρονιζέτω ὁ Ἐπίσκοπος — Γνωρίζε ἐν ᾧ Ἐπίσκοπε τὸ ἀξίωμα σου, ὅτι ὡς τῷ δεσμεῖν ἐκκληροῶ καὶ ῥυπαρίαν, ἔτω καὶ τῷ λύειν. Apostol. Constitut. lib. 2. cap. 18.

(d) Ἐτὶ ἐβεβήλωσε καὶ τὸ ὀκνεῖν ἀξίαν, καὶ τὸ θεῶ ἐκκληροῶ, καὶ καὶ παροκλινεῖ σὺν τῷ. *ibid. in cap. 10.*

(e) Γνωρίζε ἐν ᾧ Ἐπίσκοπε, τὸ ῥόπον σου καὶ τὸ ἀξίαν, ὡς θεῶ τύπον ἔχων ἐν ἀνθρώποις, τῷ πάντων ἀρχῶν, ἐν ἀνθρώποις, ἱερέων, βασιλέων, ἀρχόντων — καὶ ἔτι ἐν Ἐκκλησίᾳ
καὶ 24

ver all, over Priests, Kings, Princes, &c. who all are subject to you [in Things pertaining to God.] Do you therefore so maintain your Dignity and Station in the Church, so speak and so act, as one who are appointed to sit in Judgment upon Offenders. Since to you Bishops it is said, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.*

The first Council of (f) *Arles* (held before the great *Nicene* Council) hath given a Power to Bishops over the *Præsides Provinciarum*, who in their respective Provinces sustain'd the Character of Lords Lieutenants; "but yet were subject themselves to Episcopal Correction, when ver they should so act as to deserve it." And inasmuch as it was usual with these to be sent either from the Imperial City, or from divers Parts of the Empire, to Places in which they came Strangers, They could not be admitted to Communion, in the Place they came to as Governors, without bringing from the Bishop of the Place they left, Letters of Communion; (which in those Days was the known Way of receiving Strangers, who came out of one Diocess into another) and then the Bishop of the Diocess they remov'd to, was to look afterwards into their Manner of Life and Behaviour.

K 2

Nay,

κατέξῃ τὸ λόγον ποιῶμεν, ὡς Χριστιανὸν ἔχον κρῖνεν τὰς ἡμετέρας ἐκκλησίας· ὅτι ὑμῶν τοῖς Ἐπισκοποῖς εἰρηναῖα· ὃ ἐκ δὲ δὴσῃς ὅπτι τὸ γῆς, ἔσαι δεδεωμένον ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ· καὶ ὃ ἐὰν λύσῃς ἐπὶ τὸ γῆς ἔσαι λελυμένον ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. *Apostol. Constitut. lib. 2. cap. 11.*

(f) De præsidibus qui fideles ad præsidatum prosiliunt, placuit ut cum promoti fuerint, literas accipiant Ecclesiasticas communicatorias; ita tamen ut in quibuscunq; locis gesserint, ab Episcopo ejusdem loci cura de illis agatur; & cum coeperint contra disciplinam agere, tum demum a communione excludantur. *In 1 Concil. Arelat. Can. 7.*

Nay, to carry this Point yet farther, (g) *Theodosius* himself, tho' an absolute Monarch, held himself bound to receive Episcopal Correction, and to abstain from Communion, 'till he had duly humbled himself for the Offence he had committed, in his cruel Devastation of *Thessalonica*.

Ambrose resolutely withstood his Admission to the Church, and the *Emperor* was content to wait, 'till his Humiliation had soften'd the *Bishop*, and dispos'd him to *absolve* the *Royal Penitent*.

From this, as from a well known Fact, *Augustin* takes a very pertinent Occasion of arguing the Point with such, as through a false Modesty should refuse Submission to the *Penance* assign'd them.

(b) Perhaps (says he) for this very Reason, God in his wise Providence did so order Things, that *Theodosius* the *Emperor* should do publick *Penance* in the Face of the Church, (since his Crime was publick, and could not be conceal'd) that no Man, for the future, might thro' Shame decline a Submission to it. For shall a Senator decline Submission to a Discipline, which an *Emperor* thought himself oblig'd to bend to? Shall one, who is under the Degree of a Senator, plead Bashfulness against coming under that Correction, which an *Emperor* did not account himself too high to come under? Much more shall every Trader, or vile Mechanick, be too big and lofty for that Humiliation, which
an

(g) See the whole Account of this in *Paulinus's* Life of *Ambrose*, prefix'd before the latter's Works.

(b) Propterea Deus voluit, ut *Theodosius* Imperator ageret poenitentiam publicam in conspectu populi, maxime quia peccatum ejus celari non potuit: Et erubescit senator, quod non erubuit Imperator? Erubescit nec senator, sed tantum curialis, quod non erubuit Imperator? Erubescit plebeius, five negociator, quod non erubuit Imperator? *Augustin. in Hamil. 49. ex. 50.*

an Emperor, in all his Grandeur, thought it best to condescend to?

Well! but all this notwithstanding, the learned Mr. Selden will have it, that Princes might excommunicate; nay, that even *Heathen* Princes might and did execute this Authority. He instances in the famous Case of *Pāulus Samosatenus*, who being convict of Heresy, and of various other Crimes, by the Bishops assembled in Council at *Antioch*, was depos'd from his See, and one *Domnus* was chosen to succeed him. But he [*Paulus*] being unwilling to quit Possession of the Church and Palace, the Bishops address'd the (then) Emperor *Aurelian*, who gave Command, that *Paul* should resign, as the Bishops of the Christian Religion in *Italy* and *Rome* should determine upon that Affair.

(i) This is all the Account we have of that famous Transaction. Mr. Selden puns upon this, and would impose upon his Reader, by the ambiguous Term of (k) *Exclusion from the Church*; which in one Sense means indeed *Excommunication*, but in another, implies no more than a *local Dispossession*. *Paulus* was loth (we find) to yield Possession to a Successor; the Church, (i.e. the Edifice) with the *Manse* adjoining, was the Property of Christians; this (the Emperor determin'd) should be occupy'd by those, to whom the Proprietors by their Letters had consign'd it; and

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this

(i) See the whole of it in *Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 7. cap. 29, 30.*

(k) Ab Aureliano Augusto impetrarunt ipsi (viz. Episcopi) ut is eum ab Ecclesiā abigeret; id est, planē, ut is sententiam excommunicationis, quantum ad personam hominis itidem ferret, atq; executioni cōercendo mandaret. Atq; itā secularis imperii autoritate ab Ecclesiā extruditur, & plane quā ab autoritate illā fieri potuit, suadentibus illis excommunicatur. Selden de Synedr. veter. Ebraor. lib. 1. cap. 13.

this Mr. *Selden* will have to be the Emperor's Act of *excommunicating* Paulus. For what (says he) is *Excommunication*, but *Expulsion from the Church*? Yes! *Excommunication* is, and was ever esteem'd to be more than a mere *local Expulsion* from the Church. It always imply'd a Denial of the Gospel-Ordinances, and with them the Means of saving Grace; and in the Case of *Paulus*, it was attended moreover with a Degradation of him from his Ecclesiastical Functions, as well as from a mere *corporal Possession* of the Church with its *Appurtenances*.

Let us but transfer the Scene to our present Age, and suppose a Case depending between a Criminal Incumbent, who may have forfeited his Church by Male-administration; and another, to whom the Law may have assign'd it upon the former's Misbehaviour. Should a Writ now be here directed to the Sheriff, for the peaceable Entry and quiet Possession of the new Incumbent, would any Man in his Senses from thence infer, that the secular Power had either *excommunicated* the former, or *ordain'd* the latter?

Could a Man of Mr. *Selden's* Learning, see nothing like this in the Case of *Paulus*? Did the Emperor *Aurelian* intermeddle with the *Exclusion* of *Paulus* from *Communion*, with deposing him from his Office, or with writing circular Letters, to notify his *Excommunication*, and the Ordination of *Domnus* to succeed him? I defy any Man living to say and to prove that he did: He only determin'd upon the Possession and Property of certain Edifices, and consign'd them to the Possession of those whom the Bishops of *Rome* and *Italy* should vest with them. This is all which *Eusebius* tells us of that famous Transaction; and what, I fain would know, can this have to do with

ith Excommunication, or Ecclesiastical Cen-
re? E'en just as much, as *Lease and Release* have
do with *Binding and Loosing* !

From this Taſt of Mr. *Selden's Ingenuity*, the
eader will (I hope) obſerve what Regard is
ie to his *Learning* ; and will therefore be cau-
ous of truſting his Authorities, whenever he
otes againſt the Church, whoſe Power he fear'd
d hated.

The Summ then is this; that whatever Fetters
ay have been caſt upon the *Ordinances of God*
y the *Conſtitutions of Man*, the Biſhop ſhould,
owever, be true to his own Character, and ſhould
lain and exerciſe the Powers appertaining to it.

All Antiquity points him out for the Perſon
ntruſted with this Diſcipline; St. *Ignatius* makes
im *all in all*, in every Matter of an Eccleſiaſtical
Nature; and (1) *Ambroſe excludes all from having*
ny Pretence to it, but him, and ſuch as ſhould act by
is Delegation. Of him it will be requir'd, and to
im only the *Essentials* of it ſhould be therefore
eſt.

If human Powers will lend him their Aid, and
will act in Concert with him, the Church of
Chriſt will be truly thankful for the Countenance
and Succour it ſhall thence receive; but we
hould, at the ſame Time, be careful that the
human do not *extinguish the divine Ordinance*, nor
under Pretence of *helping it in one Caſe, binder it*
in another.

It might, and did, ſubſiſt for 300 Years, with-
out any other Support than what it receiv'd from

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the

(1) Jus hoc ſolis permiſſum eſt ſacerdotibus. Rectè igitur
Eccleſia vindicat, quæ veros ſacerdotes habet; hæreſis ven-
dicare non poteſt, quæ ſacerdotes Dei non habet. *Ambroſ. de*
Penitent. lib. 1. cap. 2.

the Power of God, and from the Piety of his Servants, under all Discouragements. So it might better again subsist, than depend upon Supports, which, instead of *strengthening*, shall *undermine and weaken* it.

We *then* indeed shall see, who *fear God*, and who *despise* him, when the *Censures* of the Church shall be left to operate upon the *Consciences* of Sinners, and to work (alike) without *external Force*, and without *external Impediment* upon the inward Man.

They who have hitherto contemn'd the *Episcopal* Authority, by having acted *in Things pertaining to God*, without and against it, may hence observe the Dishonour they would have been judg'd to cast upon God and Christ, if they had liv'd in the Times of *Primitive Christianity*; and that *Order* was then esteem'd a Thing of more sacred Importance, than what the utter Neglect of it in these latter Days hath taught Men to say and think of it.

But now, by what Steps, and upon what Occasions, and in what Particulars, this *ancient Apostolick Discipline* was warp'd amongst the *Western Churches*, to the *Novelties* of *modern Practice*, (*This*) is to be the Subject of our farther Enquiry in another Chapter.

C H A P.

C H A P. III.

Of the Departure of the Western Churches from the Primitive Model.



THE Steps by which this Change was made, and the Occasions of it, will in course be related, when the several Particulars are recounted, in which the *modern* hath deviated from the *primitive* Example.

The chief of these Particulars, will easily enough be rang'd under the following Heads:

1. The Substitution of the *private* for *publick* Penance.
2. The Redemption of the *Publick*, by Pecuniary, and other Commutations.
3. The Separation of the two Jurisdictions from each other, which were originally lodg'd in the same Hands; and proceeded together with equal Paces, *viz.* 1. That which respected the Conscience of the Sinner, and the Forgiveness of his Sin: And that, 2. which only refer'd to outward Discipline, and to the Privilege of Church-Communion.

The Consequence of which was,

4. The Variation of the Form in absolving, which from deprecatory and optative, grew about

about the same Time to be more *peremptory* and indicative.

S E C T. I.

The first Thing then which falls under our Consideration, is the Substitution of the *private* for *publick Penance*.

From what hath been cited in the foregoing Chapters, it appears, that the Shame of the publick Discipline did deter many from submitting to it; and *that* very early, since (a) *Tertullian* (we have seen) was forc'd to exert his Eloquence in answering the Objection which arose from a false and mistaken Modesty. *Is it better* (saith he) *to be damn'd in Secrecy, than to be absolv'd openly?* But he needed not to have argu'd thus, if the Practice of *private Absolutions* had been then in Use. He might have found a more expeditious Way of solving the Difficulty, by some *middle Practice*, if he had *then* been acquainted with the Veil, which *now* is us'd to cover the Blushes of the Penitent, and to pardon his *Sin*, without exposing him to *Shame* for it.

(b) *Pacian* after him complain'd in more pressing Terms, of Peoples Backwardness in this Particular, who "when they had open'd their Grievances to their Spiritual Physician, yet neglected afterwards to pursue his Advice, and to go thro' the Course prescrib'd to them." He pushes

(a) See him cited in pag. 47. Note b. An melius est damnatum latere, quam palam absolvi? *Tertull. de Penitent. cap. 10.*

(b) Similes sunt illis, qui plagas quidem aperiunt ac tumores, medicisq; etiam assidentibus confitentur. Sed admoniti quæ imponenda sunt negligunt, & quæ bibenda fastidiunt. *Pacian. in Piranes. ad Penitent.*

hes his Complaint yet further in the following Words, and observes to his People, (c) " how they did not so much as comply with the outward Forms of Penance, such as were open to the very Eye of the Bishop; and if but externally submitted to, might attract his Commendation of them; such as were then the known Rigours of Penance in Diet and Habit, and all outward Appearances. "

(d) *Austin* pursues much the same Manner of Complaint and Writing, where he argues the point with those " who pretended Shame against a Practice, which the famous Emperor *Theodosius* had then so lately submitted to. "

All this intimates to us a gradual Declension, and a growing Unwillingness in the People those Times, to comply with an Usage which carry'd so much of seeming Reproach and Shame along with it: And therefore the Fathers of the Church were always forc'd to be large and vehement in commending the Usefulness and excellence of penitential Austerities. Thus *Tertullian* of the publick Exomologesis. (e) *When it reproaches a Man, (saith he) it really raises him; when it represents him outwardly as a Mourner, it lays the Foundation of inward Gaiety and Joy; when it accuses, it doth at the same Time defend him; and when it seemingly condemns, it virtually absolves him.*

(c) Ne hæc quidem, quæ videri etiam à sacerdote possunt à Episcopo teste laudari; ne hæc quidem quotidiana observamus; flere in conspectu Ecclesiæ, &c. See him cited in pag. 78. Note u.

(d) See him cited in pag. 132. Note b.

(e) Cum igitur (*Exomologesis*) provolvit hominem, magis relevat; cum squalidum facit, magis mundatum reddit; cum accusat, excusat; cum condemnat, absolvit. In quantum non peperceris tibi, in tantum tibi Deus, crede, parceret. *Tertull. de Penitent. cap. 9.*

him. He concludes this Head, with observing, that *the more of Severity and Rigor a Man exercis'd upon himself, the more of Mildness and Mercy he should find at the Hands of God.*

These, and the like Endeavours of the Clergy, for the *four first* Centuries, did with much ado sustain and keep alive this Discipline throughout that Period; and it may be clearly trac'd down to the Age of *Austin* and *Jerom*, the *former* of whom hath been cited often enough in the preceding Parts of this Discourse, to make it apparent, that how much soever this Discipline might be then *declining*, yet it was not *extinguish'd*; and the *latter* hath left us a famous Case in his Writings, whereby we may safely judge that it was still (at that Time) in Use.

The Case is of one *Fabiola*, (*f*) “ who upon
“ a Divorce from her former Husband, had mar-
“ ry'd another in his Life-time, against all Rule,
“ and upon the Death of her second Husband,
“ submitted

(*f*) Quis hoc crederet, ut, post mortem secundi viri in semetipsam reversa, quo tempore solent viduæ negligentes iugo servitutis excusso agere se liberiùs, adire Balneas, volitare per plateas, vultus circumferre meretricis; saccum indueret; ut errorem publicè fateretur, & totâ urbe spectante Romanâ, ante diem paschæ, in Basilicâ quondam Laterani, qui Cæsariano truncatus est gladio, staret in ordine pœnitentium, Episcopo, Presbyteris, & omni populo collachrymantibus, sparsum crinem, ora lurida, squalidas manus, sordida colla, submitteret? Quæ peccata fletus iste non purget? Quas inveteratas maculas hæc lamenta non abluant? — *A little further we have an Account of the Process in this Matter.* — Recepta sub oculis omnis Ecclesiæ communioni quid fecit? Scilicet in die bonâ malorum non oblita est — quin potius omnem censum quem habere poterat (erat autem amplissimus, & respondens generi ejus) dilapidavit ac vendidit, & in pecuniam congregatum usibus pauperum præparavit. *Hironym. in Epist. ad Oceanum. No. 30. Epitaph. Fabiol.*

submitted to publick Penance, which *Jerom* here describes in all its Rigours; and after he had so done, and was restor'd to Communion, she sold a very plentiful Estate, and assign'd it all to charitable Uses. "

Yet we may here observe of our Author, that ushers in his Account of this Affair with a Note of Admiration! *Who would believe it?* It was at that Time so wonderful! not but that there were Instances, to be sure, of the Practice besides this; but this had some Circumstances attending it, which very much heighten'd the Piety of the Action. "She was newly then a Widow, and so might more probably have enter'd upon the Thoughts of another Marriage, than of Submission to penitential Austerities! She was a Person of Fortune and Distinction; both which she was content to abandon, and to expiate her Sin, by giving away the one, and by laying aside the other. "

Upon the whole, however, I am apt to suspect, that this Discipline was more and earlier on its Decline in the *Roman*, than it was in the *African* Churches; since there is more express and frequent Mention of it in *Austin*, than what is found in *Jerom*, who was very conversant with the Usages of *Rome*.

The one of these dy'd about 20, the other about 10 Years before the Entrance of *Leo* upon his Pontificate, which was *A. D.* 440. Now *Leo* was the first Bishop of the *Latin* Church, who, by express Authority and Grant, made a Gap in the penitential Discipline. Others might conceive at the Breaches made in it, as what they wanted Power to restrain; but none before him did avowedly *license*, much less *command* in any case a Neglect of the publick Humiliation.

Now

Now *He*, in a Letter to the Bishops of *Campania*, “ (g) directs them to discontinue the Usage, which then, it seems, obtain’d of publishing out of a Paper the Nature of such Crimes as had been *privately confess’d*, and that *because private Confession to the Priest* was (in his Opinion) *sufficient* to the Expiation of Guilt. And although (as he goes on) it might seem to argue the Power of their Faith, when their *Fear of God* surmounted all Apprehension of *Shame from Man*; yet in regard that the Sins of all Men, which however did demand Expiation by Penance, were not of a Nature fit to be publish’d, therefore he judg’d it proper to remove such an *inconvenient* Custom, for Fear of driving many from the Advantages of Penance, who might either be afraid or asham’d of letting their Enemies into a Knowledge of their Guilt, and of exposing themselves thereby to the Edge of the Laws. Inasmuch as that *Confession did suffice* to all Intents and Purposes, which was *made first to God, and next to the Priest*, who is appointed to *intercede* with God on the Behalf of Penitents; and that
“ thus,

(g) Ne de singulorum peccatorum genere libellis scripta professio publicè recitetur; cùm reatus conscientiarum sufficiat solis sacerdotibus indicari confessione secretâ. Quamvis enim plenitudo fidei videatur esse laudabilis, quæ propter Dei timorem apud homines erubescere non veretur, tamen quia non omnium hujusmodi sunt peccata, ut ea quæ poenitentiam poscunt non timeant publicare, removeatur tam improbabilis consuetudo, ne multi à poenitentia remediis arceantur, dum aut erubescunt aut metuunt inimicis suis sua facta referre, quibus possint legum constitutione percelli. Sufficit enim illa confessio quæ primum Deo offertur, tunc etiam sacerdoti, qui pro delictis poenitentium precator accedit. Tunc enim plures ad poenitentiam poterunt provocari, si populi auribus non publicetur conscientia confitentis. *Leo. Epist. No. 80. ad Epist. Campan.*

thus, in all Likelihood, greater Numbers would be prevail'd with to submit to Penance, if the Secrets of their Consciences should not be made publick.

Thus far *Leo*, who, because some Sins were unfit for Publication, would therefore suffer none at all to be publish'd; departing herein from the Practice of the ancient Church, (b) which distinguish'd between the Degrees and Kinds of Sins thus privately confess'd; and what were fit for Publication, (viz. what were likely to be attended with no other Inconvenience, than with Shame to the Party, by being publish'd, these) she determin'd to have expos'd in the open Light; as, on the other Hand, what might probably be follow'd with farther Mischiefs, either to the Offender himself, or to any one else, these she prudently directed to be reserv'd in Silence; and yet the guilty Party submitted to publick Penance; from whence (as (i) *Augustin* hath observed) it was only known, that some Offence had been committed, which merited such Correction, tho' what in particular that Offence might be, remain'd still a Secret.

But now by this Constitution of *Leo*, the Case, we may easily believe, must have been very much alter'd. For if, as he hath roundly asserted, *Confession to the Priest alone were sufficient*; now, if any, would be at the Trouble of the publick Exomologesis, where Acknowledgment was

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(b) See what was cited from *Origen* to this Purpose in pag. 46. Note g. Si præviderit talem esse languorem tuum qui in conventu totius Ecclesie exponi debeat & curari, &c.

(i) See what was cited from *Austin* in pag. 60. Note y. Il. li quos videtis agere poenitentiam, scelera commiserant, &c. and from *Basil* in pag. 74. Note w.

to be made of their Sin in the Face of the Congregation. And if the *Priest's Intercession* to God would serve all Purposes, the *Prayers of the Church*, which had hitherto been all along consider'd as of mighty Consequence and Efficacy in this Matter, would thenceforwards be rendered of little or no Account in it. And the Event hath answer'd the Apprehensions, which might have been so justly form'd upon these Relaxations. For in Fact the *publick Exomologesis*, and the *Prayers of the Church*, have to a great Degree been neglected, ever since *Confession to the Priest alone*, exclusive of other Witnesses, hath been esteem'd *sufficient*; and since his *Prayers alone* have been judg'd effectual, without those of the Congregation join'd to them.

Confession to the Priest in private, was indeed all along recommended, either in Cases of Doubt and Difficulty, or else in order to the *publick Exomologesis*. But yet it was the *latter* which was chiefly, and indeed always, insisted on, wherever the Conscience was burden'd with *deadly Sin*. There was anciently no Belief, that Sins of so deep a Die, could be cur'd without it. The *Prayers of the Church* were then consider'd as of great Importance; and the humble Behaviour of the Penitent, did not only *satisfy* for the Scandal, (since none was given by *secret Sins*) but it rais'd moreover Compassion in the Observers, and mov'd them to sollicit the Throne of Grace the more effectually on his Behalf. And besides the Proof it gave of the Reality of his Humiliation, it cherish'd an holy Disposition in his Mind, and made him more cautious of his future Conduct.

What

What hath been cited from (i i) St. Cyprian, shews what a Friend he was to the *publick Excommunication*, in the Case of *secret Offences* known only to God. What Gregory Nyssen hath written in his Canonical Epistle, for the Encouragement of these *secret Offenders* to acknowledge their Offence in *Publick*, proves at once his own opinion of the Practice, and the Esteem it was in with the Age he lived in.

But as *Augustin* here is fullest to our Purpose, shall give my Reader his Words at length.

He is calling upon such as had offended by the Sin of Incontinence; and he addresses them in the following Manner.

You, (saith he) (k) who have so offended, come in, and perform your Penance in the Face of the Church, that you may have the Benefit of its Prayers. And let no man here pretend to excuse himself by saying, " I repent before God, I perform it secretly within my own heart; God will pardon me, as knowing my Sincerity. " For this Rate, the Keys would in vain be given to the Church; and the Powers of binding and loosing would signify nothing. And shall we thus go about to defeat the Gospel, and to vacate the Words of Christ our Saviour?

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(i i) See him cited in pag. 48. Note (i) See also Gregory Nyssen to this Purpose in the Appendix, No. 1. Note (b)

(k) Qui post uxores vestras vos illicito Concubitu maculatis, si præter uxores vestras cum aliqua concubivistis, petite Pœnitentiam, qualis agitur in Ecclesiâ, ut ores pro his Ecclesia. Nemo sibi dicat, Occulte ago, apud Deum, novit Deus qui mihi ignoscit quia in corde ago. Er sine causâ dictum est: Quæ solveritis in terrâ soluta sint in Cœlo? Ergo sine causâ sunt claves datæ Ecclesiæ? Frustramus Evangelium? Frustramus verba Christi? omittimus vobis quod ille negat? *August. in Rom. 49.*

vicious? Or shall we cheat you with a Promise of granting what he hath denied you?

Thus different is the Language of *Augustin*, from that of *Leo's* Constitution; tho' *Leo* was Pope within a very few Years from the Death of *Augustin*. *Augustin* thought an Ordinance of the Gospel defeated by what *Leo* soon after him judged an expedient and commendable Practice. *Augustin* esteemed the Prayers of the Church to be necessary, where *Leo* determined, that those of the Priest without them would be as available: So that *Leo's* was plainly a Novel appointment, and made a remarkable Breach in the old Penitential Discipline; as substituting Confession to the Priest in the Room of that Confession, which had anciently been made before the Church; and as determining, that the Prayers of the Priest alone would obtain the Penitent's Pardon, to which those of the Congregation heretofore were added.

Yet all this respected hitherto the Case of secret Offences only: For as to Notorious Sins, which gave publick Scandal; and especially as to the three Famous Instances of them, viz. Idolatry, Unchastity and Bloodshed, *Leo* was still of Opinion, that they were to be expiated by Publick Discipline; and accordingly in his Letter to (k k) *Rusticus*, he determines expressly, that such as had been Guilty of those heinous Crimes, should not be admitted to Communion, but thro' the Door of publick Penance. Thus likewise he tells

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(k k) Si autem aut Idola adoravere, aut Homicidiis vel Fornicationibus contaminati sint, ad Communionem eos ni si per Pœnitentiam publicam non oportet admitti. *Leo and Rusticus in Epist. 92. C. 17.*

Nicetas (l) that "such Women as had been married to others, during their Husband's Captivity, and refus'd to return to their first (lawful) Husbands, upon their Deliverance out of it, should be depriv'd of the Communion of the Church." The same Sentence is again pronounc'd by him, "against such, as had submitted to be Re-baptiz'd; that (m) Penance and Imposition of Hands from the Bishop, were to be the Terms of their Restoration." Finally, "as to those who had been led into Idolatry during their Captivity, he speaks full in the Language of the Ancients; (n) let them satisfy for their Sin by Penance, and let the Measure of their Satisfaction be taken, rather from the Contrition and real sorrow of their hearts, than from the Time of their Continuance under the outward State of Discipline."

Upon the whole it is very clear, that tho' the foremention'd Constitution Pope Leo made a Breach in the Publick Discipline; yet he did not thereby remove it wholly. He destroyed indeed the Relation, which till then there had ever been between Private Confession, and Publick Penance for the Sins so confess'd: But as to sins, which came any other Way under ecclesiastical Cognisance, the same Course might

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(l) *Ecclesiasticâ Communionē priventur. Ibid. in Epist. ad Nicet.*

(m) *In Societatem nostram non nisi per Pœnitentiæ remedium, & per Impositionem Episcopalis manûs communionē recipiant unitatem; temporis Pœnitudinis habitû moderatione tuo constituendâ judicio. Ibid.*

(n) *Pœnitentiæ satisfactione purgantur; quæ non tam temporis longitudine, quàm cordis Compunctione pensanda sūt. Ibid.*

might still be used with them, notwithstanding the Order he had taken with *secret Offences*.

Indeed there are Traces to be found of the *Publick Discipline* thro' divers Ages of the Church, much lower than the Times he lived in. Although the *Private Way*, which he had introduced, did gradually, I conceive, supplant the Use of the *Publick*; the latter of which, however severe and rigid in Point of *Law* and *Rule*, grew thenceforwards to be lax enough in *Practice*, and was too *seldom*, tho' still it was *sometimes*, put in Execution.

Fulgentius was born soon after the Death of *Leo*, viz. about the Year of our Lord, 464 (whereas *Leo* died *A. D.* 461) and he lived to the Year 529, or, as others compute till *A. D.* 533. (o) He says of Penance, that (p) even then (in his Days) it retained its *Efficacy* to the Sinners profit, if he performed it within the Pale of the *Catholick Church*; to which, in the Person of *St. Peter*, God had committed the Power of binding and loosing.

Gregory the Great enter'd upon his Pontificate, (q) *A. D.* 590, and laboured very hard in restoring Discipline, which in his Time was grown much enfeebled, thro' the Barbarity of the Times, and the Innovations wrought in it by the *Clancular Practice*.

" (r) He tells his Readers of the Art and Tenderneſs, wherewith Sinners in Power " were

(o) *Du Pin*. *Eccles. Hiſt.* 6. Cent.

(p) *Sed etiam Pœnitentia peccatori nunc prodeſt, ſi eam in Eccleſiâ Catholicâ gerat; cui Deus in perſonâ beati Petri ligandi ſolvendiq; tribuit poteſtatem. Fulgent. in lib. un. ad Petrum Diacon.*

(q) *Du Pin* in the Place and Century juſt cited.

(r) *Potens & prœtervus cum aliquid perpetrâſſe cognoviſur.*

were then to be treated, lest instead of being reform'd by Discipline, they should be hardened and made worse by it; that the Preacher was to chuse a Subject, which he knew would reach the Case of such an Offender, but was by no means to apply it to him in particular, except the Transgression were *Publick* and *Notorious*; for then, such as should sin in the Face of the World, were to be rebuked as *Publickly* as they had ventured to sin; lest (says he) the Preacher should seem by his Silence to approve the Crime."

From hence then we may well infer, That what (s) *Tertullian* speaks of as given in the Church, viz. *Publick Rebukes, Admonitions* and *Censures*, did still continue to be given in it, (tho' not so frequently) even down to the Pon-

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tificate

noscutur, tempus quæritur ut de malo quod fecit, increpetur; nisi enim Prædicator sustineat, quando proferre congruè correptionem possit, augeat in eo malum quod insequitur. Sæpè enim contingit, ut talis sit qui nulla increpationis verba suscipiat. Quid itaque in hujus culpâ Prædicatori agendum est; nisi ut in Sermone Admonitionis, quem pro communi Salute omnium Auditorum facit, tales Culpas ad medium deducat, quales eum perpetrâsse considerat, qui & præsto est, & de se solo adhuc argui non potest, ne deterior fiat? & cum generaliter contra culpam Inuestio intenditur, Correptionis verbum libenter ad mentem ducitur, quia potens pravus ignorat, quod sibi hoc specialiter dicatur. — Magnâ itaq; Prædicatoris arte agendum est, ut qui ex apertâ Correptione deteriores sunt, quodam temperamento Correptionis ad Salutem redeant. — Sed hæc de occultis potentium delictis loquimur; nam quando & aliis cognoscentibus peccant, aliis etiam cognoscentibus increpandi sunt; ne si Prædicator tacet, Culpam approbâsse videatur. *Gregor. in Tpm. 1, Expos. Moral. in 16 Cap. Job. lib. 13. Cap. 3. & 4.*

(s) Ibidem (viz. in Congregatione) exhortationes, castigationes, & censura divina, *Tertull. in Apologetic. advers. Gent. C. 39.*

ificate of *Gregory the Great*: "The Persons
 "to whom *Gregory* alludes in this Passage,
 "were Sinners in Power, of whose Crimes
 "the Priest had some way or other got No-
 "tice; tho' they were not Notorious; and
 "he was to use all his Art, in order to affect
 "these Men with a due Sense of their Crimes;
 "yet so as *not to give them Offence*, nor Occasion
 "of flying out into further Extravagances."
 Which is a Way of speaking and advising, ve-
 ry different from the Simplicity and Authority
 of the earlier Ages; and argues the Difficulty
 which the Pastors of the Church did then lie
 under in the Execution of their Office: How
 to rebuke with all Authority, when their People
 would so ill endure the Use of *any*.

Yet as bad as their Case then was, the Case
 of our present Clergy, I fear, is worse; who,
 should they take even this tender Course, this
 round about Way of coming at the Conscience
 of a Potent Sinner, would be censured as busy
 Medlers; and who rather designed to preach
 at the Man than against his Sin.

The same Author will furnish us elsewhere
 with a further Specimen of the Looseness, which
 generally then prevailed amongst all Orders
 and Degrees of Men; how (1) both Priests and
 People run Riot in Wickedness, and when they were
 any way prevail'd with to come to themselves, so far

(1) *Catervatim nunc in flagitia corrunt non solum Sub-
 jecti debiles, sed etiam Prælati & Sacerdotes negligentes;
 sed plerique eorum; dum quodammodo ad cor redeunt, se
 errasse confitentur; Qui tamen sic volunt contra se peccata
 proferre, ut velint adhuc de officio sacri Ordinis honorari.
 Turpes in secreto se proferunt, sed foris præter Ordinis
 castitatem videri humiles erubescunt. Gregor. Lib. 6.
 Expos. in 1 Reg. Cap. 16. Tom. 2.*

as. to confess their Faults, yet would they not submit to be censured for them, nor to appear in a Posture becoming Penitents. It should seem from hence, and from what a little before preceded, that our Author would have revived the Ancient Relation between Private Confession and Publick Penance. (u) The meer Confession (saith he) of the Mouth, is not the true nor genuine Exomologesis; but that which is followed by Penitential Mortifications, for we then only can be sure of the Sinner's Conversion, when he endeavours to wipe out the Stain of Guilt, which his Mouth hath confessed, by Rigours and Severities, suitable to the Affliction which he professes to be under. And again, (v) the Confession of Sin is required chiefly for this Reason, That the Fruits of Repentance may follow thereupon. — And again — (w) They who make a specious Shew of confessing their Sins, but do not answer those fair Appearances by the Realities of a Penitential Humiliation, are compared to Saul, who did indeed acknowledge his Sin, but yet would not be duly humbled for it. Of some again he complains, who (x) hid their Sins from their Spiritual Guides, and endeavour'd as much

L 4

as

(u) Signum ergo veræ Confessionis non est in oris Confessione, sed in afflictione Pœnitentiæ. Tunc namq; bene conversum peccatorem cernimus, cum digna afflictionis austeritate delere nititur quod loquendo confitetur. *Ibid.*

(v) Idcirco omnis peccatorum Confessio requiritur ut fructus Pœnitentiæ consequatur. *Ibid.*

(w) Saul ergo qui confitetur, & honorari vult, non affligi & humiliari, quid designat, nisi eos, qui Confessionem sterilem habent, & fructum non habent; qui decorem Confessionis verbis humilibus præferunt; sed verborum virorem non humilitate Pœnitentiæ sequuntur? *Ibid.*

(x) Peccata sua suis Præpositis abscondunt, & ut vix inveniri possint & argui, quantum possint eadem peccata lavigant, ne qui eis præsent, eorum granditudinem

as might be to palliate and excuse them, that their heinousness might not appear. Whilst others confessed indeed of their own accord, but yet were not enough humbled for the Crimes whereof they accus'd themselves; whereas he goes on to observe, that Penance was indeed as necessary as Confession. Once more — (y) He mentions the Austerities of Penance, and the Separation of wicked Members from the Communion of the Church, as still in his time remaining; how much soever declining from the Vigour of the ancient Discipline; and (z) that the Government of this whole Matter was entrusted with the Bishop, and was not esteemed available without his Direction.

From the Whole of what hath here been cited, we may, I think, observe, That in the Age of Gregory the Great, it was often difficult to bring Men so far, as even to *private Confession*; and yet that there was a good deal more of this Practice, than of *publick Discipline*; the latter of which, however it might here and there, in a few Instances be put in Execution, yet was not likely to be so often, when both Clergy and People were to such a Degree corrupted; the one so negligent in exacting, and the other so backward in submitting to it.

What

nem attendant. *Ibid. in Cap. 15.* — Quidam etiam sponte ad confitendum veniunt, sed pro quibus se accusant, non ipsi lugent — Non solum confitenda sunt peccata, sed etiam Pœnitentiæ austeritate delenda. *Ibid.*

(y) Excussi autem sunt reprobi, id est, à fidelium societate separati. *Ibid. lib. 3. Expos. in 1. Reg. Cap. 7.*

(z) Carnem pœnitendo atterunt — Quæ tamen Afflictio Pœnitentiæ ad delenda peccata tunc demum idonea est, cum Sacerdotis fuerit iudicio imperata; cum ab eo pœnitentium actibus discussis, pro modo criminis, opus ei decernitur afflictionis. *Ibid.*

What he hath written upon the *Pastoral Care*, expresseth indeed on *his* Part a great deal of Industry, and Endeavour to restore the Vigour of the ancient Discipline; but yet doth at the same time apparently suppose the Want of it, and that the *private Management* had in a manner suppress'd the *publick Cognisance* of Offences.

(a) *Isidore* of *Sevil* was Cotemporary with *Gregory* the Great; but out-lived him by 32 years, dying in (or about) the Year 636. He hath inform'd us, That the (b) "*publick Discipline* (at least in the Case of *publick Sins*) was used, when he wrote (however rare and languishing it might be in Practice.) But indeed the Notion seems to have been then pretty current, That *private* Offences might be *privately* expiated, although *notorious* Crimes might not so be smother'd; nor was the Delinquent to be left even in the *private Management*, if he did not reform upon it, but was to be *publickly* rebuked, in Failure of the other Method." In the same place he blames those (c) "Pastors, who excommunicated their People for their Sins, in order to obtain of them a Submission to "*Penitential*

(a) See *Du Pin* in 7. Cent.

(b) Qui admonitus *secrète* de peccato corrigi negligit, publice arguendus est; ut vulnus quod *occulte* sanari nescit, manifestè debeat emendari. — Manifesta peccata non sunt occultè correptione purganda; Palam enim sunt arguendi qui palam nocent; ut dum *apertè* objurigatione sanantur, hi, qui eos imitando deliquerant, corriganter. *Isidor. Hispalens. Sententiar. Lib. 3. Cap. 46.*

(c) Nonnulli Præsules gregis quosdam pro peccato à Communionem ejiciunt, ut pœniteant; sed qualiter possunt vivere debeant, ad melius exhortando non visitant, *Ibid.*

“ Penitential Discipline ; but took at the same
 “ time no Care of instructing them in their
 “ future Behaviour, or of exhorting them to
 “ a better Practice.” He plainly speaks of
 (d) *Conversion in private* ; so that the *private way*
 had then unquestionably obtain’d ; although
 as yet it had not quite thrust out the *publick* ;
 since of the latter he very plainly speaks in
 divers Passages, as not utterly extinct. He
 must mean (for Instance) the *publick Humilia-*
tion, where he tells his Reader what was re-
 quisite to the due Performance of the *Penitential*
Office ; viz. (e) “ *Tears and Self-condemnation*
 “ *proportionable to the measure of the Sin committed ;*
 “ and where he represents the *Form (f)* of it
 “ *to be in Sackcloth and Ashes* ; and observes
 “ moreover, that it was *designed as a Substitute*
 “ *to Baptism, because the latter was but once allow-*
 “ *ed of ;* and again, where, for the Sake of that
 “ *Reverence, which was due to the Clergy above the*
 “ *People* : He recommends to the one the Per-
 “ *formance of it in the Presence of God only ; where-*
 “ *as the other were to go thro’ it, whilst the Priest*
 “ *was*

(d) Quidam sunt, qui secretè conversi sunt. *Ibid.* 2 lib.
Sententiar. Cap. 7.

(e) Ille Pœnitentiam dignè agit, qui reatum suum satis-
 factione legitimâ plangit ; condemnando scilicet ac de-
 flendo quæ gessit ; tanto in deplorando profusius, quanto
 extitit in peccando proclivius. *Ibid. Cap. 7.*

(f) Bene ergo in Cilicio & Cinere pœnitens deplorat
 peccatum ——— Pœnitentia autem remedium Ecclesia Ca-
 tholica in spe Indulgentiæ fidenter alligat ad exorcendos
 homines ; & post unum Baptismi Sacramentum, quod sin-
 gulari traditione commendatum sollicitè prohibet iteran-
 dum, medicinali remedio Pœnitentiæ subrogat ad jamen-
 tum ——— Honorum duntaxat dignitate servata ; ita
 ut à Sacerdotibus & Levitis Deo tantum teste fiat ; à cæteris
 verb, affante coram Deo solenniter Sacerdote. *Ibid. de Offic.
 Eccles. lib. 2. Cap. 16.*

"was solemnly ministering before God at his Altar."

This I conceive must refer to Penitents as to a publick Order of Men, who were as much a distinct Order as the Competents and Catechumens were; of whom likewise he treats in the same Passage. And this Construction is further confirmed to us, from what he writes of the Door-keeper's Office, in a Letter to Ludisfred Bishop of Corduba; which, as he there observes, was, to (g) shut and open the Doors of the Church, to take Care of whatever was lodged in it, or did any way appertain to it; to let in the Faithful to their proper Station, and to exclude such as were under publick Censure, and all Infidels. Hitherto therefore we have at least a Shadow left us of the publick Discipline, and of the Stations which were observed in the ancient Church.

He means the Publick beyond Exception, where he says, that (b) Penance is to be performed

(g) Ad Officium pertinent Claves Ecclesie, ut claudat & aperiat Templum Dei, & omnia quæ sunt intus extræque custodiat; Fideles recipiat, Excommunicatos & Infideles expulsiat. Ibid. in Epist. ad Ludisfred. Cordubens. Episcop.

(b) Ipsa autem Pœnitentia juxta qualitatem delictorum agenda est; nam sicut levia peccata occultâ oratione delentur, ita gravia coram Ecclesiâ per Pœnitentiam & Satisfactionem remittuntur. — Pœnitentia vera in omni sancto opere sollicitudinis anxietas. Non habet omnino risus, fabulas vanas non recipit, neque desiderii inquinatur factis; protèrvit; terrena non concupiscit, cœlestia desiderat, de suo suo cogitat, judicium futurum semper intendit, & qualiter coram Deo dignè appareat, hoc quotidie sibi procurat, soli Deo militat, in nullis Mundi negotiis involvitur. In vigiliis & orationibus frequentissima est, in jejuniiis exercitata, in cibo & potu moderata, in labore & lectione assidua, in caritate perennis, in castitate perpetua, in sermone verissima, in juramento continens; benigna est & patiens, in-

ed according to the *Quality of Offences*, that the *Less* may be expiated by *secret Prayer*, but that the *Greater* would require a *more publick Satisfaction in the Face of the Church*. He proceeds a little after, to describe with what *Circumstances of Severity and Rigour* the *publick Discipline* was attended; “ with what *Abstinence* from innocent Mirth, “ and (otherwise) *lawful Liberties* : With “ what *Contempt* of this World, and what “ *Aspirations* towards the other : With what “ *Affiduity* in Watchings and Alms, in Fast- “ ings and Prayers : With what diligent At- “ tendance upon the Word of God : And with “ what *Caution* against all the *Inlets to Sin*.”

In reading the Description which he hath here given us of the State of Penance, a Man is almost tempted to fancy himself in the 3d or 4th Century ; when these Austerities were actually submitted to, which I doubt, our Au-
thour did only paint and describe. Not but that there might be, and were, *even then*, some Instances of the Practice, which, it is plain, was not quite discontinued ; altho’ in the Pas-
sage here cited, he hath rather, I fear, told us, what it *should* have been, than what it *was*.

Private Penance was apparently now in Use ; and as it was much more easily perform’d than the *Publick*, it will easily be apprehended, that the former might be as much as the Clergy could generally obtain from their People ;
whose

vidiā non succenditur, irā non superatur, cavet jactantiam, humilitatem amat, contumeliam non rependit, odit avaritiam, fugit vanam gloriam, superbiam detestatur, gaudia respuit, gemitus suspiria & tribulationes amplectitur. *Ibid. in Exhortat. ad Penitentiam.*

whose Zeal at that time was grown much colder, than it had been in the earlier Ages.

Some few Bishops, famous for their Piety and Learning, did what they could to prop and support a declining Discipline. But what alas! could they hope to do effectually, when their Clergy were remiss, and their People barbarous and headstrong? Yet thus much we may observe even here, to the Shame of our present Generation, that in this Point, even the 7th Century made nearer Approaches than we do, to the *primitive Pattern*.

We are now come down to the Age of our famous *Theodorus*, Archbishop of *Canterbury*, who was 34 Years old when (i) *Isidore* died (*viz. A. D. 636.*) This great Prelate is charg'd by (k) *Morinus*, "With having been the first who brought
" in the Innovation of secret Penance for
" secret Offences." Whereas before his time, if *Morinus* hath laid his Charge right, even secret Offences were punish'd with *publick Penance*.

(l) Monsieur *Petit*, who published the *Penitential*, which goes under the Name of *Theodorus*, hath undertook to vindicate our Archbishop from the Charge which *Morinus* had brought against him; and fain would shew, that the *private Penance* had a Foundation in the very Beginnings of the Church; although not one of his Authorities proves it.

What

(i) See *Du Pin* in *Eccles. Hist.* 7. Cent.

(k) *Theodorus*, Homo Græcus, primus apertè morem sustulit publicè de Criminibus occultis pœnitendi. *Morin. de Administ. Penitent. lib. 10. Cap. 12. Sect. 2.*

(l) In *Theodor. Doctrin. de Penitent. ab omni Suspici-
one novitatis vindicat.*

What carries the best Show of Proof with it, is cited by him from *Augustin*, and yet the very *Title* of the Homilies (11) from whence he would draw the Inferences to his Purpose, evidences their entire Relation to brotherly Reproof, in the Case of one Brother trespassing against another.

What the Father hath occasionally mentioned concerning the Bishop's Knowledge of a Crime, which was unfit to be published, for fear of exposing the Party to the Edge of Temporal Laws, falls under another Consideration, and hath nothing to do with the *private Penance*, which Mr. *Petit* would here contend for.

Indeed the Party was not in this Case oblig'd (*Supra*) to publish the Sin thus committed by him; but still the Bishop might and did persuade his Submission to publick Penance for it; whereby it was known, that he had been guilty of some enormous Crime; tho' the particular Species of the Fact was secret. If the Party would not hearken to the Bishop's Persuasion, it doth not appear, that the Bishop could in this Case proceed any farther; since it hath already been observ'd from *Augustin*, That Proof was to be made of Facts before the Parties could be excluded from Communion.

(11) *De eo quod scriptum est in Evangelio; Si peccaveris in te frater tuus, corripe eum inter te & ipsum solum.* August. Serm. 15. & 16. de verb. Dom. Nos volumus corrumpere & corrigere; Quid si inimicus querit audire quod puniat? Novit enim nescio quem Homicidam Episcopus, & alius illum nemo novit: Ego sola illum publice corrumpere, & tu queris inscribere. Proxius nec prodo nec negligo; corripio in secreto, pono ante oculos Dei judicium, terreo cruentam conscientiam, persuadeo penitentiam, *Ibid.* in Serm. 76. See and compare with this, what is written and cited in Pag. 60. Note (y) and pag. 74. Note (w).

union for them; and it was unfit for the Bishop himself, to be both Witness and Judge in the same Case.

As to the Argument formed by Mr. Petit upon imaginary Inconveniences, and upon the Want there would (anciently) have been of a Cure for divers Sins; if this of private Penance had not been applied to them; it is plainly of no Validity nor Force; since to argue from imaginary Conveniences or Inconveniences to real Facts, is a Way of Reasoning as fallacious as any Man can fall into; and will prove any thing he hath a mind to, if it will prove any thing at all. It is but urging, that the thing would be Convenient or Inconvenient; and its Being must stand or fall with the fanciful Suggestion.

It is allowed notwithstanding, that in the Time of *Augustin*, the public Discipline was declining, and had much ado to support itself; and therefore this same Father, (m) in his Epistle to *Aurelian*, "recommended the softer Way of treating Sins, which had Multitudes to countenance them." St. *Cyprian*, I guess, would scarce have condescended to any such Regards; tho' in Proportion to the Number of Christians, the Case of the Lapsed might have had as much pleaded for it in Abatement of Penitential Rigours, as any Case could pretend to in after Ages.

But nothing yet appears of private Penance, as establish'd in the Age of *Augustin*, whatever Approaches might be making towards it.

For

(m) Non ergo asperè, quantum existimo, non duriter, non modo imperiosa illa tolluntur: Magis docendo quàm jubendo, magis monendo quàm minando. Sic enim agendum est cum multitudine peccantium, severitas autem exponenda est in peccata paucorum. *Augustin*. in Epist. 63. ad *Aurel*. Episc.

For Sins not liable to *publick Discipline*, the (m m) Father just cited, with *Pacian* and *Ambrose*, hath shewn us the Cure of them by *Prayers* and *Alms*, and by *future Diligence in good Works*; which no Man (surely) will judge fit to have been imposed upon the Sinner under the Notion of *Punishments*; tho' they might be recommended to him as Instances of *Piety* and *Charity*, and of other Virtues.

These Fathers, however, where they mention the Case and the Cure of it, say not one Word of any *private Penance*; which alone is a strong Presumption, that the Usage was not known to them; and when join'd with the Silence of other Fathers down to Pope *Leo*, amounts, in my poor Opinion, to a convincing Proof, that there was really no such Practice.

And yet after all, *Monsieur Petit* was right in his *Conclusion*, tho' *wrong* in the Premises, by which he would have come at it. For *Theodorus*, at last, was *not* the Man, thro' whom this Innovation first crept into the Church. Pope *Leo*, (we have seen) about 200 Years before *Theodorus* entred upon his Arch-bishoprick, (which was A. D. 680.) either *laid*, or at least, *establiſh'd*, and *settled* the Foundation of this great Change; and the Practice hath been traced from *Leo* down to the very Period we are now got into.

Morinus might well enough have said (nor would Mr. *Petit*, I suppose, have gainsaid) that *Theodorus* was the first in the Latin Church, who drew this Discipline into Form and Order,
by

(m m) See what hath been cited from those Fathers, in Pag. 115. Notes (s) (t) (u)

by writing a Penitential, and by prescribing a Method to direct both Priest and People in the Use of it.

He is represented, (*n*) as the most knowing and learned Man of his Times; a *Greek* by Birth, and a *Roman* by Habitation and Converse; so that he might be easily and well acquainted with the Usages, both of the Eastern, and Western Churches; and therefore he must be confessed to have been very fit for such a Work; which the *Ignorance* of his *Clergy* had rendered necessary; as the *Barbarity* of his *People* would admit no Return to the Rigours of the ancient Church.

We are now advanced to the Time, wherein the *publick Discipline*, tho' not quite lost, was yet almost extinguished; for instead of the Ancient *Exomologesis*, and the Humiliation of the Penitent in the Face of the Church, we hear henceforwards of little more, than of the Modern Practice, by *private Confession* and *private Absolution*, which bring little or no Shame upon the Sinner, and carry very little of Terror against Sin, when Pardon is obtained so easily.

Nay the *Ancient* is quite revers'd in the *Modern* Practice of the Roman Church. The *binding* Power of the Church was heretofore understood to be *then* exercised, when the Sinner was *bound over* to certain Penitential Austerities; and when these had been submitted to for the *appointed Season*, he *then* was loosed from them, and restored to his former Privileges.

M

ledges.

(*n*) See, in Monsieur *Petit's* Edition of his Penitential, large Commendations of him from the Testimony of various Authors.

ledges. But now, in effect, he is *loosed* first, and *bound* afterwards; it being usual with the Roman Clergy to give *Absolution* immediately after *Confession*, upon Promise from the Penitent, that he will perform the Penance assigned him, when so absolved: So that after he is *loosed* (or absolved) his *Bond* (*viz.* his Obligation to Penance) does still continue to hold him. A Preposterous Course! and quite against Ancient Usage, as well as against the Nature of the thing itself. Thus much will be acknowledged by all Candid Persons even of their own Persuasion.

Gabr. Albaspine will teach them this ingenuous Acknowledgement, That (o) *anciently Penance was not given together with Absolution; and that Penance had in the earlier Ages a very different Signification from what it hath at present; that Absolution, and the Peace of the Church were never then granted till after Satisfaction made, and Penance gone through.*

The Use of *private Confession* is likewise very different in the *present*, from what it was in the *Primitive Roman Church*.

Then it was rather a Matter of *Prudence*, than of *Necessity*, *commended* indeed, but not *enforced* as universally necessary; what was then exacted

(o) Antiquitus nunquam Pœnitentia concedebatur cum Absolutione, aut sine Benedictione, & manuum Impositione. Omnes item Canones, qui aut concedunt, aut negant jus Pœnitentiæ dari, liquidò demonstrant, hanc vocem aliam habuisse acceptionem, quam habeat hodiè, & à nostrâ plurimum abesse — Crederem antiquam Disciplinam instituisse, ne ulli unquam nisi post satisfactionem & Pœnitentiam Absolutio & pax Ecclesiæ concederetur. *Gabr. Albaspin. de veterib. Ecclesiæ Ritib. Lib. 2. Observat. 3.*

exacted and insisted on, was the *publick Exomologesis* of the Penitent, and his solemn Humiliation by it in the Face of the Church; and even the *Private*, which was in *some Cases recommended*, tho' not generally commanded, had an apparent Reference to *publick Discipline*. Whereas now the (p) *private Confession* is represented as *universally necessary*, and made exceedingly *extensive*, not only to the Sins themselves, but to the (q) *Circumstances, Occasions, and Inducements* which led into them; and it is called moreover (r) *Sacramental*; and (against the whole Stream of Antiquity) the (s) *Repetition* of this Discipline is allowed *toties quoties* without any Limitation. Nay, the (t) *Council of Trent* hath proceeded so far as to say of the *publick Exomologesis*, That *Christ indeed had not forbid it*,

M 2

yet

(p) *Omnis utriusq; sexûs, postquam ad annos discretionis pervenerit, omnia sua solus peccata confiteatur fideliter (saltem semel in anno) proprio Sacerdoti, & injunctam sibi Pœnitentiam studeat pro viribus adimplere. In Concil. Lateran. 4. Habet. A. D. 1215. Cap. 21. And*

Mortifera peccata singula enumeranda sunt. In Catechism. ad Paroch. Part. 2.

(q) *Neq; verò solum peccata gravia narrando explicare oportet; verum etiam illa quæ unumquodq; peccatum circumstant. Ibid. in Catechism. ad Paroch.*

(r) *Si Sacramentalem confessionem è Christiana disciplina exemeris, constat plena omnia occultis & nefandis sceleribus futura esse. Ibid.*

(s) *Nullum est tam grave & nefarium scelus, quod Pœnitentie Sacramentum non quidem semel, sed iterum, & sæpius non dealeat. Ibid. de Pœnitent. Sacrament.*

(t) *Et si Christum non vetuerit quin aliquis in vindictam suorum scelerum, & sui humiliationem, cum ob aliorum exemplum, tum ob Ecclesiæ offensæ ædificationem, delicta sua publicè confiteri possit; non est tamen hoc divino præcepto mandatum; nec satis consultè humanà aliquà lege præcipetur; ut delicta, præsertim secreta, publicà essent confessione aperienda. In Concil. Trident. Sess. 14. Cap. 5.*

yet that it *would not be prudent to revive it*, and that, what they style the *Sacramental Confession*, is the (u) *Divine Institution*, and All in All. The Bishops in divers Ages did indeed attempt to *revive* the ancient Discipline ; or at least to hinder any further Innovations in it ; witness the Canons of various Councils, held in several Times and Countries, whereof we in *England* were not without our Proportion.

Charles the Great contributed very good Assistance towards this Work ; and in the Time of his Son *Ludovicus Pius*, there was a notable Struggle for the primitive Discipline, by the Attempt which was made in the (v) 6th Council of *Paris*, to *suppress and abolish the Penitential Formularies*, (which were then, it seems, got abroad) as contradicting, in divers Points, the Authority of the Ancient Canons. Yet even then (I observe) no Attempt was made to revive the ancient Practice of *publick Penance* for *secret Sins*, but instead of it, the current *Usage* of that Age

(u) Si quis negaverit *Confessionem Sacramentalem* vel *institutam*, vel ad *Salutem necessariam* esse *Jure Divino* ; aut dixerit modum *secretè* confitendi soli Sacerdoti, quem *Ecclesia Catholica* ab initio semper observavit, & observat, alienum esse ab institutione & mandato Christi, & inventum esse humanum, *Anathema* sit. *Ibid. in Can. 6. de Pœnit. Sacrament.*

(v) Quoniam multi Sacerdotes partim incuriâ, partim ignorantia, modum penitentia reatum suum confitentibus, scœus quam jura Canonica decernant, imponunt, utentes scilicet quibusdam codicillis contra auctoritatem Canonica scriptis, quos *Penitentiales* vocant, omnibus nobis salubriter in commune visum est, ut unusquisq; Episcoporum in sua parochia eosdem erroneos codicillos diligenter perquirat, & inventos igni tradat : Ne per eos ulterius Sacerdotes imperi homines decipiant. *In Consil. Paris. 6. Cap. 32. Lib. 1.*

Age was established by *Law*; that (*w*) *secret Sins should have secret Penance, and publick Crimes be publickly punished according to the Canons.* Even the Zeal of this good Emperour pushed him upon no further Endeavour, than only to support in this Point the prevailing Practice by his Imperial Power. The Innovation *then* had taken so deep a Root, that there was no extirpating it.

But whatever good Intentions this Prince might have, the Effects of them did soon expire with him, and with his Race; and were entirely sunk in the Barbarity and Confusion of the Times which succeeded them.

Whilst the Bishops had any Remains of Liberty or Power, the great Point they laboured, was Conformity to the Rules of the Ancient Church. But when Pope and Prince had long been concerned in a joint Conspiracy to de-

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prive

(*w*) Si verò occultè & sponte confessus fuerit, occultè faciat (Pœnitentiam.) Et si publicè ac manifestè convictus aut confessus fuerit, publicè ac manifestè fiat; & publicè coram Ecclesiâ juxta Canonicos pœniteat gradus. *In Capitul. Carol. Mag. & Ludovic. Pij, Lib. 5. Cap. 116. Edit. Baluz.* So Rabanus Maurus de Instit. Cleric. L. 2. C. 30. Quorum autem peccata occulta sunt, & spontaneâ confessione soli tantummodo Presbytero, sive Episcopo ab eis fuerint revelata, horum occulta debet esse pœnitentia, secundum judicium Presbyteri sive Episcopi, cui confessi sunt; ne infirmi in Ecclesiâ scandalizentur, videntes eorum pœnas quorum penitus ignorant causas. *And thenceforwarde it grew into an established Rule, That any Sin how grievous soever, if committed in secret, might be expiated by secret Penance.* Si verò occultum fuerit peccatum, quantumcunque fuerit grave & enorme, quantumcunque abominabile, sufficit illud secretâ confessione, & secretâ satisfactione purgare. *In Excerpt. ex Pœnitentiali Mag. Bartholomæi, Episcopi Oxoniensis. Cap. 30. Apud Mr. Petit. in Theodor. Paris.*

prive them of both, they grew tired with contending against such potent Adversaries, and submitted at last to all the Fetters, which were prepar'd for them.

Throughout the whole Period, from *Leo* down to our present Age, the *private Management of Discipline* hath been gaining upon the *publick*, and hath left it indeed little more at present than an empty Name without Effect or Meaning; but yet it hath here and there, in a few Instances, preserved its Being all along; though without any great Resort to, or great Use of it. The Councils speak frequently of it, as of a thing a *little in Practice*, and *more in the Wishes* of the respective Times, which they were severally held in.

To begin with the very Year in which Pope *Leo* died. The Council of (x) *Tours* "makes express Provision for the Behaviour of such as had been admitted to Penance."

The very first (y) Canon of the 6th *Roman Council*, "enjoins the Observation of the *Nicene* Canons in general; and then in the 3d Canon, proceeds more particularly to prohibit any one being promoted to the Clergy from the Order of *Penitents*."

In the Council of (z) *Agatha*, we have further Directions as to the Case of Penitents, and the

(x) Qui post acceptam Pœnitentiam ad seculares illecebras reversus fuerit, à communione Ecclesiæ extraneus habeatur. *In Concil. Turonens. Habit. A. D. 461. Can. 8.*

(y) Canones Nicœni Concilij custodiantur— Pœnitentes ad sacros ordines ne aspirent. *In Concil. Roman. 6. Habit. A. D. 466. Can. 1mo. & 3tio.*

(z) Pœnitentes, tempore quo Pœnitentiam petunt, impositionem manuum, & cilicium super caput à Sacerdote (sicut ubiq; constitutum est) consequantur— De lapsis hæc

the manner of their being admitted to that Order; and, in another Canon of the same, "we have express mention of their Station in the Church, tho' with some Note of the Difficulty there was to keep them in it, and of the growing Difuse into which it had been falling."

The Council of (a) *Ilerda* hath provided against the Contumacy of an Offender, who should refuse to depart from the Church at the Minister's Appointment.

The 3d Council of *Orleans* (b) was held expressly for the Purpose of reforming Ecclesiastical Discipline.

The first of *Barcelona* speaks of the (c) *Clinical Penance*, and "directs the Penitent upon his Recovery to go thro' it, and to submit to a Segregation for the time the Priest should assign him to it." (d) "The wilful Murderer was (by

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"the

sunt observanda. In Pœnitentium loco standi & orandi Humilitatem ita noverint observandam, ut etiam ipsi, cum Catechumeni egredi commonentur, ascendant. Hoc si observare voluerint, constituto tempore admittendis ad Altarium observatio relaxetur. Quod si ardua vel dura forte putaverint, statuta præteritorum Canonum implere debebunt. *In Concil. Agathensi. Habit. A. D. 506. Can. 15, & 60.*

(a) Qui jubente sacerdote pro quâcunq; culpâ ab Ecclesiâ exire contempserit, pro noxâ contumaciæ tardius recipiatur ad veniam. *In Concil. Ilerd. Habit. A. D. 524. Can. 10.*

(b) Ad reformandam Ecclesiæ Disciplinam. *Ibid. in Trul. Concil. Aurelian. 3. Habit. A. D. 538.*

(c) De his qui in infirmitatibus poscunt Pœnitentiam, & à Sacerdote accipiunt, si postea convaluerint, vitam Pœnitentium peragant, segregati à communione quam diu probabilem sacerdos eorum approbaverit vitam. *In Concil. Barcinonensi. 1. Habit. A. D. 540. Can. 8.*

(d) Qui voluntariè Homicidium fecerit, ad januam Ecclesiæ Catholicæ semper subjaceat, & communionem in exitu vitæ suæ recipiat. *In Concil. Lucensi. 2. Habit. A. D. 572. Can. 78.*

“ the 2d Council of *Luca*) to be detained at
 “ the Church-Door, and to enter no further
 “ as long as he lived, but in his last Moments
 “ he might be reconciled.”

“ (e) The 3d of *Toledo* revives the ancient
 “ Customs of Penance, which it proceeds to ex-
 “ plain, and then confirms them ; after having
 “ given, at the very first, a solemn Sanction
 “ to all the Canons of the Ancient Church in
 “ General.”

This Endeavour to keep alive or to recover the ancient Discipline, was remarkably slackened in the 7th Century, where the Provisions made for it are more sparing than in the Times preceding.

Yet the Council of (f) *Chalon sur Soane* just mentions the “ Order of Penitents as still remaining.”

The 9th of (g) *Toledo* directs the Reception of *Clinical Penitents*. So does the (b) first of *Aix*, held under *Charles* the Great in his Royal Palace ; who indeed was forced upon exerting his Authority, to procure any Reverence to the

(e) Omne quod à priscis canonibus prohibetur, sit, resurgente disciplinâ, prohibitum, & agatur omne quod præcipit fieri.— De pœnitentibus, secundum formam antiquorum Canonum dentur Pœnitentix. See pag. 92. Note (11).

(f) Pœnitentibus à Sacerdote datâ confessione indicatur pœnitentia. In Concil. Cabilonens. 2. Habit. A. D. 650. Can. 8.

(g) His, qui in tempore necessitatis præsidium pœnitentix & reconciliatibnis implorant, nec satisfactio interdicenda est, nec reconciliatio deneganda. In Concil. Toletan. 9. (vulgò 11.) Habit. A. D. 675. Can. 12.

(b) Qui in periculo constituti sunt, & convertunt se ad Deum, canonicè inquiratur de reconciliatione, & canonicè reconcilientur. In Concil. Aquisgranens. 1. Habit. A. D. 789. Can. 34.

the Episcopal Function, and to uphold a tottering and sinking Discipline.

Thus his (i) *Capitular*, exhibited in the Council of *Tours*, threatens to displace and disown all Persons whatsoever (his own Children not excepted) who should not pay due Obedience to the Bishop.

“ The 6th Council of *Arles* (k) convened by his Order, directs all Counts, Judges, &c. To obey the Bishop ; and such as had been guilty of publick Crimes, were to perform publick Penance, according to the ancient Canons.”

As to the Conduct of our own Bishops within this Period, they exerted themselves (by all the Accounts we have of them) with a Zeal at least equal to any of their Neighbours ; altho’ they had no such Supports to back them, as those of *France* enjoyed in the *Carolinian* Family.

The (l) ; Synods of *Landaffe*, and the Behaviour of Bishop *Ondocens*, will fully prove, that there was then among our Clergy no Want of Inclination to exert the Vigour of the ancient Discipline ; and the noble Stand which was made against Papal Encroachments, in the Case of *Austin* the Monk (sent hither by Pope

(i) Qui Episcopo suo inobediens inventus fuerit, sciat se in nostro imperio nec honores retinere, licet etiam filius noster fuerit, nec in palatio locum. *In Concil. Turonens. Habit. A. D. 800. Capitul. Eccles. Car. Mag. Cap. 2.*

(k) Comites, Judices, & omnis populus obedientes sint Episcopo—— Qui publico crimine convicti sunt rei, publice judicentur, & publicam pœnitentiam agant secundum Canones. *In Concil. Arlat. vulgò 6. Habit. A. D. 813. Can. 13, & 26.*

(l) *In Can. Eccles. Britan. Synod. Landav. Habit. circiter A. D. 560. See these Synods cited at large in the following Section.*

Pope Gregory the Great) will be a lasting Monument of the Courage, wherewith our *British* Bishops defended the Rights of their Sees, and the Honours of their Function.

In the former we may observe the *Reguli* of those Western Parts submitting to Episcopal Correction; and in the latter we may find the (m) "*British* Prelates would own no other Defence than what was due from them by the Law of Charity, to any Spiritual Jurisdiction, save only to that of their own Bishop of Caerleon."

This, in the Name of the Rest, was the bold Declaration of the Abbot of *Banger*.

But as *Labbée* and *Binius* represent this Matter from (mm) *Bede*, his Freedom of Speech cost his Monastery very dear, little less than 1200 of his Monks falling soon after by the Rage of King *Edilfrid* in this unhappy Quarrel; according to the Prediction of the Holy Man *Augustin*; (if these Writers may be credited,) though as others strongly suspect, at his *Instigation* and *Persuasion*. And if this Suspicion be duly founded,

(m) Notum sit & abiq; dubitatione, quod nos omnes sumus & quilibet nostrum obedientes & subditi Ecclesie Dei, & Papæ Romæ, & unicuiq; vero & pio Christiano ad amandum unumquemq; in tuo gradu in perfectâ charitate, & ad juvandum unumquemq; eorum verbo & facto, fore filios Dei; & aliam obedientiam quam istam non scio debitam ei quem vos nominatis esse Papam, nec esse Patrem Patrum. Vindicari, & postulari, & istam obedientiam nos sumus parati dare & solvere, & ei & unicuiq; Christiano continuo. Præterea nos sumus sub Gubernatione Episcopi Caerlegionis super Osca, qui est ad superviendum sub Deo super nobis, ad faciendum nos servare viam spiritualem. In Synod. 1. ab *Augustin*. Habat. A. D. 601.

(mm) *Bede* Lib. 2. Cap. 2. *Labbée* & *Binius* in *Corsil. Wigorn.*

founded, it will very much abate to us, the Honour they assign him of a Prophetick Spirit.

We may observe however, a great while after this, some apparent Footsteps of the *publick Discipline* being left amongst us in the Case of enormous Crimes, and of its being extended to Persons of the highest Rank, when they were found to deserve it.

Witness again for this, another (n) Synod of *Landaffe* towards the end of the 9th Century; "wherein *Clotri* (one of the *Reguli* in those Parts) was excommunicated by Bishop *Berthguin* for Perjury and Murder;" which Crimes (we may read) "had afterwards, in the Reign of King (o) *Ethelred*, a Brand set upon them, and a Prohibition to the guilty Parties from coming into the Royal Presence, till they had expiated their Offence by *publick Penance*."

Indeed the *British* Bishops (as being more out of the way of Papal Corruptions) did better maintain their Ground than their other Neighbours; and we have accordingly more frequent Instances of the Use they made of the Powers belonging to their Sacred Function.

But after the *Norman* Conquest, Pope and Prince entred here, as elsewhere, into a close Confederacy, for sharing between them a very large Portion of the Episcopal Authority.

(p) *Eadmer*

(n) *In Synod. Landavensf. 14. Habit. circiter A. D. 887. See it cited more at large in the following Section.*

(o) *Homicida, aut Pejerator coram Rege non veniat, priusquam pœnitentiam egerit coram Deo & sæculo. In Concil. Pananglic. ab. Ethelred. Edit. A. D. 1006. Cap. 25.*

(p) *Eddmer* the Monk of *Canterbury* hath recorded some notable Effects of the Conquerour's Power; That "he would suffer nothing to be determined in Synods but what himself should approve of; that no Bishop of his Realm should be permitted to excommunicate any of his Barons, or great Ministers, or to lay them under any Ecclesiastical Censure, how enormous soever the Crimes might be of which they had been guilty, without his Leave and Licence first obtained for that Purpose."

The Case had hitherto been otherwise, and the Ecclesiastical Authority had ever been acknowledged in Matters of a purely Ecclesiastical Nature, and even Princes themselves, as well as their Ministers, had submitted to it, as far backwards as we have any Accounts of the Christian Religion to be found amongst us. But here was a full Stop put to the Subject's Liberty, as well as to the Ecclesiastical Authority. *All things* (saith our Author) *both Divine and Human, waited the Results of his despotick Pleasure.*

The

(p) *Cuncta divina simul & humana ejus nutum expectabant*—

Primatem quoq; regni sui, Archiepiscopum dico Cantuariensem, seu Doroberniensem, si coacto generali Episcoporum concilio præsideret, non sinebat quicquam statuere aut prohibere, nisi quæ suæ voluntati accommoda, & à se primò essent ordinata. Nulli nihilominus Episcoporum suorum concessum iri permittebat, ut aliquem de Baronibus suis, seu Ministris, sive incesto, sive adulterio, sive aliquo capitali crimine denotatum publicè, nisi ejus præcepto, implacitaret, aut excommunicaret, aut ullà Ecclesiastici rigoris pœnâ constringeret. *Eadmer Monach. Cantuariensis Histor. Novor. Pag. 6. Edit. per Joh. Selden. 1623.*

The Subject since his Time hath shifted pretty well, and is now in Possession of as much Liberty, as he knows what to do with.

But the *Episcopal Power* hath not yet shook off the Fetters, which it was then cast into; instead of any Enlargements, its Chains have rather been *heavier* than *lighter*. In the following Centuries, we may learn from the Acts of the Council of (pp) *Clarendon*, (which I should rather indeed call a *Concordal* than a *Council*) that this Limitation of the Bishop's Authority was confirmed there; "And no one of the
" King's Servants, or who *beld of him in Capite*,
" might upon any occasion thenceforwards
" be excommunicated, till the King, or (in
" his Absence) his Chief Justice, were made
" acquainted with it, that one of them might
" see Right done."

These Encroachments of the *Regal* upon the *Episcopal Power* began elsewhere somewhat earlier; and the 10th Council of (q) *Toledo* had before appointed, That "whomsoever the
" King should admit to the Honour of his Fa-
" miliarity, or his Table, the Clergy and
" People should receive into the Communion
" of the Church." But then this Council (like that of *Clarendon*) was much under the
Influences

(pp) Nullus qui tenet in capite de Rege, nec aliquis Ministrorum ejus excommunicetur, aut sub interdicto ponatur, nisi prius Rex, vel, si extra regnum sit, Justiciarius ejus conveniatur, ut rectum de eo faciat, *In Concil. Clarendon. Habit. A. D. 1164. C. 7.*

(q) Quos regia potestas aut in gratiam benignitatis acciperit, aut participes mensæ suæ effecerit, hos etiam Sacerdotum & popalorum conventus suscipere in Ecclesiasticam communionem debet; ut quod jam principalis pietas habet acceptum, neq; à Sacerdotibus Dei habeatur extraneum. *In Concil. Toletan. 10. Habit. A. D. 681. Can. 3.*

Influences of the Grandees of the Realm, who were present at it, and had no small Hand in its several Determinations.

However thro' all the Periods, which have hitherto been traced, we may observe some Remains of the *publick Discipline*, tho' much sunk in its Vigour, and much corrupted in its Purity.

We have indeed no great Reason to apprehend, that what the several Canons, which have here been cited, did *enjoin*, was, in every part of it, punctually *executed*. Only we may hence infer, that the Bishops were not wholly wanting to their Office, that they did not entirely neglect to put their People in Mind of what they could not prevail upon them fully to comply with.

Upon the whole, we are not to wonder, if, when the People were rude and licentious, the Clergy, for the general, illiterate, and tainted besides with a Proportion of their People's Vices, (in these Circumstances, we are not, I say to wonder) if Antiquity was forgot by both of them; and *then*, if the *private* (which was the more easy) Management, got daily Ground of the *publick*, (which was more laborious and grievous.) Thus gradually, and almost imperceptibly, from the Time of Pope *Leo*, did the *private Discipline* supplant the *publick*, till it had left nothing but a *Shadow* of the *ancient* Regimen; and even *that* very ill resembling the *Substance* it belonged to.

The next Instance of the Departure of the Western Churches from the Primitive Model, is to be the Subject of another Section.

SECT. II. Concerning the Redemption of the publick Canonical Penance by Pecuniary and other Commutations.

The Foundation of this is much more ancient than of the former Change; altho' the Super-structure (the Practice built upon it) seems to have been of a more modern standing.

The Council of (r) Nice, and a (little before it) that of (s) Ancyra " had entrusted the Bishops with a discretionary Power, of relaxing the Penitent's Sentence, and of shortening the Time he should continue under it, as they should observe his Behaviour to be more or less deserving. If he contented himself with the common Forms of coming into the Church, and of leaving it with other Penitents; if he did not manifest a Compunction of Heart, as well as submit to the outward Appearances and Gestures of Penitential Sorrow; he was then to have no Abatements, but was to go completely thro' the Stages and the Time assigned him. Where-

as

(r) Εφ' ἅπασιν ὅ τῆτοις προσήκει θετέλαιεν ἢ προαίρεσιν καὶ τῷ αἵματι τῆ Μετανοίας· ὅσοι μὲν καὶ ἐν φόβῳ, καὶ δάκρυσι, καὶ ὑπομονῇ, καὶ ἀγαθοεργίαις ἢ ἐπιστροφῇ ἔργῳ καὶ ἑσχατῇ ἐπιδείκνυσται, ἔτοι πλεονεξίας τὸ χεῖρον τὸ αἰσθημένον ἀποβάλλουσιν, καὶ ἐκ τῶν κοινωμένων, μὴ τὸ θεῖον πᾶν ἐπισκόπων, καὶ φιλανθρωπότερον τι εἶναι αὐτῶν βεβαιώσασθαι· ὅσοι δ' ἀδιαφόρως πηγάσαν, καὶ τὸ ἥμα τὸ εἰσέναι εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀρκεῖν ἐαυτοῖς, ἠγάσαντο πρὸς τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν, θεῖα παύσηται πλεονεξία τὸ χεῖρον.
In Concil. Nicæn. 1. Can. 12.

(s) Τῶς δ' ἐπισκόποις θετοίαν ἔχειν τὴν ἀπόστολον τῆ ἐπιστροφῆς δοκιμάσαντας φιλανθρωπείας, ἢ πλείονα πρὸς δίδου χρόνον· πρὸ πάντων δ' ὁ πρὸς δίδου βίβλος, καὶ ὁ μὴ ταῦτα θετέλαιεν, καὶ ἔτι καὶ φιλανθρωπείᾳ ἐπιμετρεῖσθαι. In Concil. Ancyran. Can. 7.

“ as if either his former Conversation had been
 “ exemplary *before* his Lapse, or if his Conduct
 “ *after* it did sufficiently prove the Realities
 “ of his inward Grief, in such Cases his Bi-
 “ shop might contract the Time allotted for
 “ his Continuance under the *Penitential Disci-*
 “ *pline*, and might restore him to Communion
 “ before its Expiration.”

The whole Stream of (†) Antiquity runs all on this side; and there is nothing in which the Fathers are more unanimous than in allowing to the Bishop this discretionary Power.

But in time, this grew to be extended to Cases and to Circumstances, which were never intended by the first Allowance.

The *Nicene Canon* did never intend to *exempt* Men from *Penance*, but to *quicken* them in the Performance of it; and only to *shorten* the Time, as their Diligence in discharging it should appear to deserve a Mitigation of their Sentence. For since the Labour of *one* Man in 6 Months might equal the Labour of *another* in 12 Months, it was thought just and equitable, that the Account and the Measure of both should be taken, rather from the Work which was *done*, than from the Time in which it was *doing*. This was all the *Redemption* which was either designed or accepted in the first five Centuries; nor do the Abuses.

(†) See in *Append. No. 1. Gregor. Nyssen's Canonic. Epist.* with what hath been cited from Pope Leo in P. 147. Note (n.) In *Concil. Carthag. 4. Can. 75. Ut negligentes pœnitentes tardius recipiantur. In Concil. Andegavens. Habit. A. D. 453. Can. 12. Pœnitentia conversis pateat omnibus, & pro Episcopi æstimatione venia concedatur.* Οὐ δὲ μόνον πρὸς τὴν φύσιν τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῶν ἀμαρτανόων καὶ μετάνοιαν οὐκ ἔχον. Chrysostom. in 1. Epist. ad Corinth. Homil. 15.

Abuses, which crept thro' this Door into the *Penitential Discipline*, seem to have taken any deep Root, or to have spread very far till many Ages after; in as much as we have little, if any Mention of them, in the *Latin Councils*, down to *Charles the Great*; nor do I remember any Complaint, or any Provision made against them in his Capitular. So that having no Intention to lead my Reader into the Darkeness and Corruption of the Ages which succeeded the *Carolinian Race*, I shall stop him in our own Country, (which is charged with the first and earliest Introduction of this Novel Practice) and shall *here* endeavour to trace up this Evil to its Source and Head; since it seems on all Hands agreed, that we are to look for it here at Home amongst our selves.

Our famous Archbishop *Theodorus* is charged again as the Author of this Innovation; which therefore (u) *Morinus* suggests to have had the same Original, both in point of Time, and of the Person who introduced it, with the private Penance for private Sins. Yet he seems doubtful of this upon (v) second Thoughts; “ And can hardly
N “ credit

(u) Itaq; istius Axiomatis de peccatis occultis occultè pœnitendum — & consuetudinis redimendarum pœnitentiarum eadem sunt initia, sive tempus, sive personam spectes. *Morin. de Administr. Sacrament. Pœnitent. Lib. 10. Cap. 17. Sect. 2.*

(v) His consideratis vix adduci possum, ut existimem *Theodorum Cantuariensem* istius redemptionis Pœnitentialis esse authorem. Nam huic concilio (viz. *Cloveshovix*) præerat *Cuthbertus Theodori*, uno intermedio, successor; annumq; quinquagesimum aut alterum post *Theodori* obitum celebrabatur ista Synodus. Quis credat *Theodori* successorem, *Theodoro*, viro per totum orbem Christianum celeberrimo, tam facile derogasse, illius constitutiones vellicasse,

" credit it, because in the Synod of *Claveshoe*
 " (alias *Clyffe*) Complaint was made against the
 " Abuses of these Redemptions, which (he
 " thinks) would hardly have been made, whilst
 " the Memory of their Author was so fresh and
 " famous. He supposes that *Cuthbert*, who
 " presided in that Synod, and was Successor
 " (next but one) to *Theodorus*, would scarce
 " have suffered any such Complaint against a
 " Practice introduced by a Man so famous in
 " his Generation as *Theodorus* was. He there-
 " fore concludes, That the Capitular concern-
 " ing the Redemption of Penance hath been
 " since his Time crammed into his Peniten-
 " tial by some later Author."

I shall no otherwise take upon me the De-
 fence of that *Capitular*, than by observing, that
 it will not therefore follow, that it hath been
 crammed into his Penitential since the Time
 of *Theodorus*, merely because it mentions the
 Practice, and prescribes the Method of *Re-*
demptions. The Practice had confessedly ob-
 tained, when the Synod of *Clyffe* was assembled,
 and was then grown up into a Grievance; it is
 therefore exceedingly probable that it had an
 earlier Original, and at least as early as the
 Time of *Theodorus*. The Abuses arising thence,
 ('tis agreed) were complained of about 50
 Years after the Decease of our Archbishop;
 and therefore, I say, were not (in all likeli-
 hood)

vellicasse, novitatis accusasse, ceterosq; Episcopos unanimi
 consensu ista probasse? Cum igitur pravâ istâ consuetudine
 invalescente, aliqui scriptores ejusmodi redemptionum le-
 ges Theodori Pœnitentialibus inseruissent, postea exempla-
 ria ab iis descripta, & undiq; disseminata multis impolue-
 runt, ut Theodori crederent esse quæ ipsius scriptis infarta
 tantum erant. *Ibid. in Sect. 5.*

hood) utterly unknown to the Age he lived in.

Cuthbert, however, could with no Reason be censured, as laying any Imputation upon the Memory of his famous Predecessor, if in another Juncture, he endeavoured to rectify those Abuses, which perhaps were less flagrant and less extensive when *Theodorus* lived, and therefore might not call so loudly, as afterwards they did, for a Cure and Reformation.

Nor was it indeed an Imputation upon *Theodorus*, that he *methodized* a Practice, which he did not like; or that he set Rules and Bounds to a Custom, which had taken too deep a Root to be wholly removed.

The Argument therefore is plainly of no Validity, which would conclude *Theodorus* not to have been the entire Author of that *Penitential*, which passes under his Name; merely because *Cuthbert* (his Successor next but one) suffered the Practices to be complained of, which are indeed *methodized* and *tolerated*, but no otherwise (I observe) *recommended* or *encouraged* in it. If he did not the best he would have done, he did however the best he could; and had he lived to the Age of *Cuthbert*, would have done (in all likelihood) what *Cuthbert* did.

There may, notwithstanding, be Reason to suspect, that we have not his *Penitential* pure and uncorrupt; though there be no Reason to suspect it corrupt in the Article now before us, merely from the mention made in it of *Redemptions* and *Commutations*.

For though I could easily enough agree with the very learned *French* Writer, whom I now have cited, that *Theodorus* was not the Author of this Innovation; yet I cannot agree with him upon the Reason he hath alledged, nor

easily be brought to believe, that the Practice now under Consideration had a *later* Rise.

The Penitential then (however corrupt in some Parts of it) might, in the Main, be our Archbishop's; and yet he will not therefore stand chargeable as the *Author* of the Practice which is therein *regulated*. For indeed the Reduction of this Matter to Rule, and the Composition of a Penitential (supposing it really to have been *Theodorus's*) is it self a strong Presumption, that it was earlier in Practice, and that he only *methodized* what had *before* a Being. In like manner as the Canonical Epistles of *Basil*, and of his Brother *Gregory Nyssen*, are not to be considered as Rules of their own *inventing*, or as Practices which themselves did first *introduce*; but as *Exemplifications* of the *Discipline then prevailing*, and of the Usages which had, some time *before*, obtained in the Church.

In the Acts of the first Synod of *Landaff*, we have somewhat looking so like the Practice, which was afterwards more fully known; that I cannot but think it had even *then* taken some Root in the *British* Churches.

(w) “ *Mouric*, one of the *Reguli* in those Parts, had treacherously killed a neighbour-
“ ing

(w) Mouricus Rex & Cynetu Landaviæ conventi, præfente Oudoco, jurarunt firmam pacem inter se tenere. Postea Rex Mouricus dolo interficit Cynetum; Quamobrem Episcopus, convocato toto suo Clero, in plena Synodo Regem excommunicavit—— Rex spatio 2 annorum remansit sub excommunicatione; cum videns animæ perditionem—— veniam quæsit—— Effusis itaque lachrymis & inclinato capite coram tribus Abbatibus Oudocus imposuit ei jugum pœnitentiæ, ad modum qualitatis & quantitatis tribus modis; viz. jejuniis, oratione, & elemosynâ. Pro *Redemptione* igitur *animæ suæ*, 4 villas ab
omni

“ing Prince, whose Name was *Cynetu*, after
 “he had solemnly sworn to a Peace with him
 “in the presence of Bishop *Oudocens*; upon
 “which the Bishop proceeded to excommu-
 “nicate him. *Mowric* (the Offender) after
 “having continued for the Space of two
 “Years under this Sentence, humbled him-
 “self, and the Bishop assigned him Penance,
 “to which he submitted. Now the Penance
 “assigned him (we are told) was to be per-
 “formed in Prayers, and Alms, and Fast-
 “ing.”

How the Fastings and Prayers were submit-
 ted to, the Acts of the Council do not inform
 us; but it is likely enough, that he was, in
 these Respects, tenderly dealt with, since “He
 “gave four Villa’s, or Manours to the Church,
 “discharged of all servile Tenures, and expressly
 “upon this Consideration, to *redeem* his Soul.”

The third Council of *Landaff* (x) affords us
 just such another Instance, “of Absolution
 “given by this Bishop’s Successor to *Guednerth*
 “(one of these *Reguli* likewise) in the Case of
 “Fratricide, which was attended with a Do-
 “nation to the Church of *Landaff* of *Lann*, *Cat*,
 “*guala* and *Tye*, with all the Lands thereunto
 “appertaining”. It is indeed true, that Penance
 was moreover assigned to both these *Reguli*;

N 3

but

omni servitio liberas Ecclesie Rex dedit. *In Concil. Lan-*
davens. Habit. circiter A. D. 560.

(x) *Guednerth* promittens vitæ emendationem in jejunio,
 oratione, & eleemosynâ, fuis lachrymis cum magnâ devoti-
 one, absolutus est ab Episcopo, junctâ sibi pœnitentiâ pleni-
 riâ ad modum culpæ. Postea *Guednerth*, memor promissi
 donavit Deo, *Dubricio*, *Theliao*, *Oudocœ*, & omnibus
 successoribus Ecclesiæ *Landavie*, *Lann*, *Catguala*, & *Tye*
 cum omni suâ tellure. *In Concil. Landav. 3.*

but then, as these Donations were probably Parts of it, and *Absolution* was first obtained ; it is very likely, that the Performance of their Promise in the last Particular might easily pass in lieu of the rest.

Now these were Facts earlier by above 100 Years, than the Entrance of *Theodorus* upon his Archbishoprick ; who, in the Year 668, was sent hither for that Purpose by Pope *Vitalian*, at the Request of our King *Egbert*, and after some stay in *France*, arrived here and took Possession, A. D. 670. He first reconciled the whole Colledge of *British* Bishops to the Roman Usages, as being a Man of great Name and Authority, and an able Manager.

It is not improbable (what *Morinus* hath conjectured) that (y) “ He did therefore either “ consent to, or introduce, the *Commutations* “ of *Canonical Penance*, because he had to deal “ with a People newly converted, and who “ might have took fatal Prejudices, if the an- “ cient Discipline had been too rigorously ex- “ acted.” But However it be,

The *Penitential* which bears his Name, hath given particular Directions after what manner these *Redemptions* or *Commutations* were to be managed. E. G. (z) “ Instead of living for a “ Year

(y) Hoc forsitan fecit vir prudens, ut barbaris nationibus, ad fidem Christianam recenter conversis, poenitendi rationem redderet faciliorem & acceptiorem, ne nimia poenarum Ecclesiasticarum duritie & acerbitate ab agenda poenitentia deterrerentur. *Morin. de poenitent. In loc. citat. p. 177. Note (u.)*

(z) Quinquaginta Psalmos in Ecclesia cantet flexis genibus. *In Penitential. Theodori, Capitul. 3. De Redemptione illius anni quem in pane & aqua jejunare debet. Qui vero Psalmos*

“ Year upon Bread and Water, the Penitent
 “ was to sing 50 Psalms upon his Knees, or
 “ give a certain Sum to the Poor, or procure a
 “ Presbyter to say Mass for him, or prostrate
 “ himself 100 times upon the Ground, and at
 “ each Prostration to repeat a *Pater Noster*.”
 So that henceforwards, from a Practice only
connived at, it grew to be an *established Rule* of
 the *Penitential Discipline*.

It is very easily indeed conceivable, that since
 Alms were always recommended as fit *Con-*
comitants of Penance, they should grow in
 time to be accepted in *stead* of it; or at least,
 if *this Part* were well performed, in which the
 Persons imposing it were so often interested,
 that other Branches of the Duty, which *they*
 were less concerned in, should be less punctu-
 ally attended to, and less peremptorily exacted,
 and as Corruptions came on, should sink at last
 into an utter Desuetude, and a total Neglect.

Upon the whole; it can be no Objection against
 the Authority of this Penitential, that these
 things are found in it; because they are found
 so soon after in unsuspected Writings.

The Synod of *Cloueshoe* (alias *Clyffe*) was held,
 I have observed, about 50 Years after the Death
 of *Theodorus*; and by that time the Practice of
Redemptions seems to have supplanted the other
 Parts of Penance; “ (a) For we find the Bishops

N 4

“ there

*Psalms non novit, & jejunare non potest, pro uno anno,
 quem in pane & aqua jejunare debet, dec pauperibus in
 elemosynam 22 solidos. Ibid. in Capitul. 5. Aut*

*Roget Presbyterum ut missam cantet pro eo. Ibid.
 Cap. 6. Aut—Centies prosternat se in terram, & per singu-
 las genuflexiones Pater noster decantet. Ibid. in Capitul. 9.*

(a) Porro non sit elemosyna porrecta ad *minuendam* vel
 ad

“ there entering their *Caveats* against it, and
 “ admonishing their People not to give their
 “ Alms, with a View of *commuting* for the Sa-
 “ tisfaction they were otherwise to make by
 “ Fasting and such like Acts of Humiliation;
 “ but rather with a Prospect of amending their
 “ Lives by their Charity, and of sooner paci-
 “ fying the Divine Wrath.”

It is evident from this Caution, That People did then apprehend, their Alms might serve in *Commutation* of their *Penance*; and therefore it was no improbable Account which I gave of the Case of the *Reguli* in the three Synods of *Landaff*; since Cases of that Kind came on afterwards in the very *same* Place, were dispatched after much the *same* Manner, and we have much the *same* Accounts of them, when these *Commutations* were unquestionably Current.

The Gifts to God, to his Saints, and to his Church, when *Redemptions* were confessedly in Use, were made, I say, in the *same* Form, and our Account of them is transmitted to us in much the *same* Expressions, (b) which were used somewhat *earlier*, when it is not so well agreed,

ad *mutandam satisfactionem* per jejunium & reliqua expiationis opera; sed magis ad augmentandam emendationem suam, ut citius placetur ira divina. *In Concil. Cloueshovia, Habit. A. D. 747. Can. 26.*

(b) Rex reconciliationem petijt. Imprimis offert Deo, S. Dubricio, Gurranno & ejus successoribus, &c. Lan, Michael, Tresceriam cum totâ suâ libertate, &c. — Reconciliatus est (*viz.* Clotri qui ruptâ pace occidit Lundgualum) accepto jugo pœnitentiæ, & immolando Deo & Sanctis, Dubricio, Teliaveo & Oudoceo, & Berthguino & omnibus suis succedentibus in Ecclesiâ Landaviæ agrum Helic, & agrum Tencu, unâ cum quinque unciijs agri, cum omni libertate, &c. — *In Concil. Landav. 14. Habit. A. D. 827. Vide p. 180, 181. Notes (s) (w) (x).*

agreed, whether these *Commutations* had obtained or not.

(c) The Ecclesiastical Laws of King *Edgar* mention the Building of Churches, and endowing them; The making of Bridges, and mending the publick Roads; the Repetition of so many Psalms, and especially liberal Alms, as the known ways of buying off Canonical Penance."

"People of Quality and Fortune might thus commute for Bodily Austerities; but the Poor were (*unluckily*) excluded from the Privilege of these *Redemptions*."

Pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and entering into Military Service against the Infidels for its Recovery, grew also about this Time to be esteemed available for the Pardon of Sin, instead of the old *Canonical Penance*.

And as it was usual upon these Engagements for the Parties to make a special *Confession* of their Sins, when perhaps they could not wait any Time for *Absolution*; this might probably give Birth to the Practice of *absolving* immediately upon the Act of *confessing*; whereas
(according

(c) *Peccatorum compositiones apud Deum fiant variis modis; sed ad eorum solutionem plurimum conducunt elemosynæ. Cui facultas suppetat, Ecclesias in laudem Dei ædificet, adjiciat prædia, &c—— Instaurat vias publicas, & aquis invijs & locis cœnolis pontes adjiciat—— De penitentis Indicijs. Quisq; potest unius diei jejunium unico denario redimere; potest etiam unius diei jejunium 220 Psalmis redimere.*

Hæc est pœnitentiæ alleviatio Magnatum qui copiâ rerum fruuntur; sed non datur inopi sic procedere. Aquisitum enim est, unusquisq; suas per se luat iniquitates. *De penitentiâ Magnatum—— in Leg. Eccles. Edgar. lat. in Concil. Habuit sub Dunstan, Archiepisc. Cant. circiter A. D. 969.*

(according to the ancient Practice) *Penance* intervened between the one and the other, and the Party was not *absolved*, till after his *Confession* he had made due Proof of his real *Conversion*.

But I am weary of pursuing this Subject thro' so much Dirt and Mud, as every Man must wade through, who shall minutely trace the several Deviations which Time hath brought on, from the *primitive* to more *modern* Practices; and therefore I shall here endeavour to relieve my self and my Reader by a Change of the Scene; and by diverting from this to another Prospect.

SECT. III. *Of the Separation of the Two Jurisdictions from each other, which were originally lodged in the same Hands, and proceeded together with equal Power, viz. (1.) That which respected the Conscience of the Sinner, and the Forgiveness of his Sin; And (2.) That which only referred to outward Discipline, and to the Privilege of Church-Communion.*

Through all the Periods, which have hitherto been traced, these Jurisdictions seem not to have been separated; but he who *absolved* from Sin, did likewise *absolve* from Censure. For as soon as ever the Penitent had gone through the Stages assigned him, and solemn Prayers had been offered up to God for his Pardon, he received his last Imposition of Hands from the chief Minister, and then was restored to his ancient Seat and Privilege; and this, for many Centuries was esteemed his *Absolution*.

The private Way of *absolving* for private Sins, made the first Breach in this Practice; afterwards

wards the *Redemption of Canonical Satisfaction* by various Methods of *Commutation*, made a further Change in it; and upon this foot the *Penitential Discipline* subsisted for 1000 Years; till the gross and growing Barbarism of the *Laity*, made *Church-men* necessary to *Secular Courts*, for the Support and Discharge of all great Offices. The Canon Law was rising up moreover at that Time to a Bulk, which entituled it soon to a distinct and entire Study. Within this Period likewise the School-Men had brought in Vogue another sort of Learning, than what former Times had been acquainted with; so that They and the Canonists had divided between them the whole Compass of Literature, as it stood in those Ages.

Now it was on all Hands agreed, that the *publick Discipline* was to be regulated by the Canons of the Church; the Bishops were (for their Parts) too much engaged in Secular Matters to attend it in their own Persons; and very many Cases were now grown Subject to their Authority; so that it was become absolutely necessary to take in Help, and to turn off the Weight of such various Incumbrances, from their own to some other Shoulders.

The Schoolmen had introduced a Way of thinking and distinguishing, which involved and perplexed the Canon Law, whose Bulk of it self was a growing Burden, and very likely to employ the Ability and Study of any Man, who would pretend to make himself a Master of it: So that, all these Circumstances concurring, the *Ecclesiastical Court*, which heretofore consisted of the Bishop and his Presbyters, came thus to be devolved upon some one Person, whom the Bishop thought fit to substitute,

stitute, for hearing and determining all Matters of Ecclesiastical Cognisance ; which, by the Piety of diverse Christian Emperors, from the first famous *Constantine* downwards, were grown to be very numerous and extensive : These Emperours thought, that by deferring so much to the Judgment of the Bishops, and by granting Appeals to them, they should with the Increase of their *Power*, procure also for them an Increase of *Respect* and *Reverence*.

By these Means, the Power which originally belonged to them as Bishops, and that which *accidentally* accrued to them by the Favour of Secular Princes, came in part to be confounded with each other ; and thus, whatever the Canons of the Church took Cognisance of, or was otherwise determinable by *Ecclesiastical Authority* (though the *Imperial Laws* were the Rules by which it was determined) came all into the Hands of that Person, who was substituted by the Bishop to preside in his Courts, and to pass Judgment upon the several Causes which were brought into them.

Among these the *publick penitential Discipline* was one of many ; which, so far as it was *publick*, and governed by the Canons of the Church, became thenceforwards the Province of the Bishop's Court, and was managed by the Person, who was appointed by the Bishop to preside in it.

The Bishop himself was usually now absent, engaged in the Entanglements and Intrigues of *Secular Business*. His Presbyters (who were used to be of his Council) were now assigned to distinct Cures, and managed the *Consciences* of their People by *private Penances*, which were grown by this time to be esteemed *Sacramental*, and

and had left indeed very little Use of the *Publick Practice*.

(d) *Morinus* will not allow, that this Distinction of the *Judicial* from the *Penitential* Court, did obtain till the 12th Century; although, as the *Private Management* of *Ecclesiastical Discipline* had long been gaining upon the *Publick*, the Grounds of that *Distinction* must have been laid much *earlier*; however the Bishop might not *sooner* transfer upon any third Person the Part he bore in the Administration of *Publick Discipline*.

But

(d) Verum circiter annum centesimum supra millesimum, aut paulo post, antiquarum poenitentiarum usu decrecente, crevit mirum in modum in civiles Laicorum causas Episcopalis autoritas. Cum autem Theologiae scholasticae fundamenta eodem tempore jacerentur, breviq; scholas omnes occupassent, *Forum poenitentiale* in praxi separari coeptum est à *judiciali*, & in varias personas transferri; ne Episcopi, eorumq; vicarij negotiorum tam Ecclesiasticorum quam Laicorum mole opprimerentur. Et licet hoc posterius, auctoritate, virtute, Spiritusq; S. communicatione priori plurimum cedat; *primario* tamen alicui *Presbytero* cæteris dominaturo delegatum est; prioris verò exercitium inferioribus & vilioribus Presbyteris demandatum. Ille igitur *primarius Presbyter*, Episcopi Vicarius, civiles omnes criminalesq; Clericorum causas, necnon Laicorum plerasq; judicavit; sed cum juris formulis strepituq; & tumultu forensi; censurasq; Ecclesiasticas pro prudentiâ suâ solus pronuntiavit; vel a jure illatas solus declaravit & executus est; solus quoq; ab iisdem *absolutionem* concessit; quam culpæ & peccatorum expunctoricem esse noluit, ne forum suum *judiciale* & *externum* cum *poenitentiali* & *interno* confunderet; neve (quod necessum fuisset) longas & multiformes secretæ omnium peccatorum confessionis ambages audiendo defatigaretur. Ideo nova *absolutionis ab excommunicatione* formula condita est, non tantum Indicativo modo enunciata, sed etiam in quâ nulla remissionis peccatorum mentio fieret. *Morin. de Administrat. Poenitent. Lib. 1. Cap. 9. §. 6.*

But all this notwithstanding; it doth not even yet appear, that any, besides Presbyters, were entrusted with such a Power; both Practicers and Judges in these Courts being usually in Holy Orders; the Men who were so, being indeed the only Persons, who had any Measure of Learning, or who could so much as read and write.

Much earlier than the Period we are now got into, (*viz.* in the latter End of the 8th, and the Beginning of the 9th Century) "The Laity were forced to be stirred up by the Canons of the Church, and by express Admonitions from their Bishops, to (e) learn the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer; and especially to (f) understand the full Importance and Sense of the latter."

So the Capitular of *Theodulph*, Bishop of Orleans, and the first Council of *Rheims* may inform the Reader.

The State of the Church was then under the Regulation and Care of the *Carolinian* Family; and when that Line of Princes failed, things went daily worse with it, and Corruption and Ignorance had a more fatal Progress. It is therefore by no means likely, that the 12th Century should have furnished any Number of Men out of the Laity, who were fit for the Purpose of presiding in the Bishop's Courts: Nor indeed was it probable, that in the very first Appointment of such a new Officer, the Bishops

(e) Omnes fideles orationem dominicam & symbolum discant. In Capitul. *Theodulph. Episcop. Aurelian. A. D. 797. Cap. 22.*

(f) Orationem dominicam quisq; discat, & sensu bene intelligat. In 1. Concil. *Rhemens. Habit. A. D. 813. Can. 2.*

Bishops should look for him where there was so little Choice ; or that they should shock the Minds of their People, by commissioning a Person whose Powers might be questioned. It was a sufficient *Stretch* of their *Authority* to quit the Business (*themselves*) and to consign it over to *another*. It is not easily to be imagined, that when they had ventured to make *this* Innovation, they should chuse at the same Time to make a *second*, by vesting a *Layman* with Powers generally esteemed *Sacerdotal*.

It must not however be dissembled (nor shall any Consideration prevail with me to dissemble what may help to give my Reader a just Idea of this whole Business) that towards the latter End of the 12th Century, (*viz. A. D. 1179.*) (g) Pope *Alexander* the 3d "recites his
"having given a Commission, to the (*then*)
"Bishop of *London* ; that he might delegate
"such Causes, whereof he was by him (*the*
"Pope) appointed to take Cognisance, to any
"one or more Persons, as he should judge expedient," without naming their Qualifications.

This of it self would (I acknowledge) conclude nothing with Certainty. But in the Century next succeeding, the Distinction (I observe) was current, between the *Key of Order*, and the *Key of Jurisdiction* ; and (b) *Aquinas*, (who lived in this 13th Century) hath clearly

(g) Cum tibi sit de benignitate sedis Apostolicæ indultum, ut Causas, quas de mandato nostro suscipis terminandas, liceat tibi personis alijs uni vel pluribus delegare, &c. — *In Appendic. Concil. Lateran. 3.*

(b) Clavis est duplex ; una quæ se extendit ad ipsum *Cœlum immediate*, removendo impedimenta introitus
in

clearly told us, That "the Key of Jurisdiction," which doth not directly, but accidentally open the Gate of Heaven, by the Medium of Church-Communion, may be (allowably) lodged in the Hands of a Person who is not entitled to the Key of Order." And again (i) "Since Excommunication hath no direct nor immediate Reference to Grace, Persons, who are not Priests, having Jurisdiction in the Legal Court, might (in his Opinion) excommunicate."

This hath ever since been the received Doctrine and Practice of the Roman Church, from which we took it, and have not yet reformed it. The learned Reader may observe from what is here cited out of (k) *Estius*, that his Opinion chimed in with that of *Aquinas*.

Mean

in Cælum per remissionem peccati; & hæc vocatur *Clavis Ordinis*; & hanc soli sacerdotes habent, quia ipsi soli ordinantur populo in his quæ directè sunt ad Deum.

Alia clavis est, quæ non directè se extendit ad ipsum Cælum, sed mediante militante Ecclesiâ, per quam aliquis ad Cælum vadit, dum per eam aliquis excluditur, vel admittitur ad consortium Ecclesiæ militantis, per excommunicationem & absolutionem; & hæc vocatur clavis jurisdictionis in foro Causarum; & ideo hanc etiam non sacerdotes habere possunt; sicut Archidiaconi, & electi, & alij qui excommunicare possunt. Sed non propriè dicitur clavis Cœli, sed quædam dispositio ad ipsam. *Tho. Aquin. in sum. Theolog. Supplem. 3. Part. Quæst. 19. Art. 3.*

(i) Cum excommunicatio non directè respiciat gratiam, etiam non Sacerdotes, modo jurisdictionem in foro contentioso habeant, excommunicare possunt. *Ibid. in Quæst. 22. Artic. 2.*

(k) Solis quidem sacerdotibus forum penitentiae ex divinâ institutione commissum est; at non solis administratio fori exterioris; cum nulla ratio cogat, neminem posse jurisdictionem Ecclesiasticam in foro exteriori exercere, qui non sit sacerdos. *Estius in Lib. 4. Distinct. 18. Sect. 14.*

Mean while, they who are loudest in their Outcries against this, which they look upon as a Corruption, and who have us, they think, at great Advantage upon this Article, should be desired to consider, that whatever of this kind is done, in our Ecclesiastical Courts, doth really proceed from the Bishop's Authority, and is (*Virtually*) his Act ; as being performed by Persons, who are appointed by him for this very Purpose ; And that it was, (moreover) no unusual Practice with the Bishops even of the purest Ages to devolve this Office (in *Cases of Necessity*) upon Persons who (*in ordinary Cases*) were not thought entituled to the *Power of the Keys*, and who might not use them but in such *Occasional Emergencies*. (1) St. Cyprian hath allowed " a Deacon to reconcile upon a Sick-bed, where no Presbyter could be procured ;" and yet it was not *originally* in the Deacon's Commission to exercise any such Authority ; but the Bishop did *occasionally* appoint him for that Purpose ; so the *Power* was the *Bishop's* ; and the *Ministry* of it did only *then* appertain to the *Deacon*, when such a Case should happen as the *Bishop* did allow it in. Our Adversaries here make no great reckoning of a Deacon's Power ; let them tell us then why, if the Bishop had so been pleased, he might not in this Example

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have

(1) Occurrendum puto fratribus nostris, ut si incommodo aliquo, & infirmitatis periculo occupati fuerint, non expectatâ præsentiâ nostrâ, apud Presbyterum quemque præsentein, vel, si Presbyter repertus non fuerit, & urgere exitus coeperit, apud *Diaconum* quoq; exomologesim facere delicti sui possint, ut manû eis in pœnitentiâ impositâ, veniant ad Dominum cum pace. *Cyprian. in Epist. 13.* See moreover what was cited in P. 126. from the Council of Eliberis. Note (s.)

have committed the Exercise of it to a meer *Layman*; since (according to them) the *Deacon*, by Virtue of his being a *Deacon*, hath really no more Authority in these Matters, than a *Layman* hath; so that the *Occasional Grant* from the *Bishop*, is all at last, which can in either Case be pleaded?

I do not indeed find that even (m) *Presbyters* had originally this Power, otherwise than by such *Occasional Delegations* from the *Bishop*; who ordinarily exercised it in his own Person; and did then only entrust his *Presbyters* with it, when, in his own Absence or Distance, the Urgency of the Case required a speedier Application of it.

The first Introduction of Lawyers into the Service of the Church, took its rise from a Request of the (n) *African Bishops*, "Who desired
 " to have such Advocates for their Churches as
 " the Heathen Priests had for their Temples,
 " and for all Matters and Causes which did
 " in any way appertain to them; and added
 " moreover to their Petition, that these Christian Advocates might be permitted to enjoy the same Priviledges, which the Imperial

(m) See what hath been written and cited in Chap. 2. Part. 2. Sect. 2.

(n) Placuit etiam ut petant ex nomine provinciarum omnium legati perrecturi, Vincentius & Fortunatianus, a gloriosissimis Imperatoribus, ut dent facultatem defensores constituendi scholasticos, qui in actu sint, vel in munere defensionis causarum, ut more sacerdotum Provincia, iidem ipsi qui defensionem Ecclesiarum susceperint, habeant facultatem pro negotiis Ecclesiarum quoties necessitas flagitaverit, vel ad obfistendum obrepentibus, vel ad necessaria suggerenda, ingredi iudicium secretaria. In Concil. Carthag. 6. Habit. A. D. 407.

"rial Law did at that time allow to the
"Heathen." These were called *Defenders of the Churches*; who sat afterwards as Judges in Ecclesiastical Causes.

This Request of the *African Bishops* was granted two Years after, by the Emperor *Honorius*. It was judged at that time of such Importance to the Churches, that (if we might believe (o) the *Conjecture* of a Man, whose very *Affertions* are usually disputable) the Request was repeated for it. And thus (as the Right Reverend and very Learned Bishop *Stillingfleet*, δ μακαρίτης, hath well (p) observed) we are hence to date the Practice and Presidency of Lawyers in Matters relating to the Church.

But it was long after this, before they *inter-meddled* with her *Censures*; not till the Schoolmen had formed their subtle Distinctions, nor till the Bishops, engaging too deeply in *Secular Affairs*, gave too great Occasion for Laymen to change Posts with them, and to mix with *Spirituals*.

Since the Distinction hath obtained, which hath here been mentioned, between the two Courts, (the *forum internum* and *externum*) those more scandalous and grievous Crimes, which anciently were punished by the Bishop, with the highest Sentence of Excommunication (till the Parties were brought to a Sense of them; and thence to a Desire of *Publick Penance*) these I say have ever since been left to the Bishop's

O 2

Courts,

(o) Serius, forte etiam ad iteratam Patrum Africanorum postulationem lata (lex) hoc demum anno 409. *Maruit. Not. in Cod. Theodos. Tom. I. P. 106.*

(p) in *Antiquit. Brit. Church. Chap. 2. P. 82.*

Courts, and have been managed there by the Key of Jurisdiction.

Other Sins of a less heinous Dye, were either assigned in the *Primitive Times* to the *Publick Exomologesis*; or else (as (q) *Pacian*, *Ambrose* and *Austin* have informed us) were judged to be Curable by *Prayers* and *Alms*, and by better Care for the Future. Then there appears to have been no middle Practice of *Private Penances*, or of *Private Absolutions*.

These (less heinous) Crimes, were what *Tertullian* (r) called the *Sins of daily Incurſion*; the common Frailties and Errors of human Life; which the *Montanists* cured by *Solemn Penance*, and the Church by *daily Prayer*.

To these lighter *Transgressions* *Tertullian* opposed those enormous and crying Sins, of *Idolatry*, *Murder* and *Uncleanneſs*, into which, if any Christians fell, they were by the Church admitted to *Reconciliation* through *Penance*; but were

(q) See them cited in Pag. 115. Notes (s) (t) (u) with what Gregory Nyſſen hath directed upon the same Occaſion in his Canonical Epistle, which the Reader may find in the Appendix, Numb. 1. Note (l.)

(r) Nam nec ipsi excidimus à quâ digreſſi ſumus diſtinctione peccatorum. Et hic enim illam Johannes commendavit, quod ſint quædam delicta quotidiana incurſionis, quibus omnes ſimus obſecti. Cui enim non accidit, aut irasci iniquè, & ultra ſolis occasum; aut & manum immittere, aut facile maledicere, aut temerè jurare, aut fidem pacti destruere, aut verecundiâ aut neceſſitate mentiri; in negotiis, in officijs, in quæſtu, in victu, in riſu, in auditu, quanta tentamur, ut ſi nulla ſit venia iſtorum, nemini ſalus competat? Horum ergo erit venia per exoratoreſ Patris Chriſtum. Sunt autem & contraria iſtis, ut graviora & exitioſa, quæ veniam non capiunt; homicidium, idololatria, fraus, negatio, blaſphemia utiq; & mœchia, & fornicatio, & ſi quæ alia violatio Templi Dei. *Tertul. de pudicit.* C. 19.

were excluded by the *Montanists* from all Access to Communion.

Tertullian makes no other Distinction, than of these two Sorts, and seems therefore to have left no room for that third Species of Sins, which (s) *Morinus* saith would fasten upon the Ancients, as the Foundation of all that Discipline, which is exercised at present by the *Roman* Priests in the *Interiour Court*, viz. that of the *Penitent's* Conscience.

For indeed that whole Range of Offences, which *Tertullian* hath placed under the Head of *daily Incurfion*; and which the Primitive Fathers taught to be curable by daily Prayer, is now the main Subject of the *Penitential Discipline* (in the *forum internum*) as it is at present managed by the *Latin Church* between Priest and People.

Anciently, as People were better affected, *St. Cyprian* hath informed us, that even for the lightest Offences they chose a Submission to *Publick Penance*. But then it was not forced upon them; they were *commended* indeed for their Zeal, but it was not *required* from them.

There could not well be a *less* Instance of offending, than by a (t) *Thought* never brought into *Act*; yet even for *this* (we are told) that the Parties humbled themselves, and chose to bear a Part in the *Publick Exomologesis*. This is mentioned to their Advantage; and imputed

O 3

to

(s) *Morin. de Administrat. Penitent. Lib. 5: Cap. 31,*

(t) Quanto & tunc majores & timore meliores — qui nullo facinore constricti, quoniam tamen de hoc vel cogitaverunt — Exomologesim — faciunt? &c. — *Cyprian.* —
See the whole Passage cited in P. 48. Note (i).

to an extraordinary Degree of their *Faith*, and their *Fear of God*.

The *Private Confession*, which obtained in the *Primitive Church*, seems indeed to have been originally designed for this Purpose; (u) that if the Sins of the Penitent, which were so *confessed*, did deserve it, he might be brought to *Publick Humiliation* for them; and if they did not deserve it, that *then* he might have the Satisfaction and Comfort of knowing himself to be still entitled to the *Peace of the Church*, and to the *Communion of Saints*; that neither any Excess of *Humility* on the one Hand, nor of *Partiality*, nor *Self-love* on the other, might mislead him in the Judgment, which he passed upon the State of his own Soul. And it is still, I conceive, recommended by our (v) Church for the same Reasons, whenever a Man shall find himself in want, either of *Comfort* or *Counsel*. Which is a modest and sober Temperament, between the *Rigours* of those who *Universally* require it; and the *Carelessness* of those who *Indiscriminately* reject it.

However the same Hands, which had the Administration of *Publick Discipline* lodged in them, were likewise heretofore entrusted with all the Preparatory Steps which led to it. There were not *then*, I mean, as *now*, Two Courts established, one for *outward Jurisdiction*, and another for the *Heart and Conscience* of the Sinner; but the same Officer, who had the Direction of the one, had the Management of the other;

(u) Ut si praverit talem esse languorem tuum, qui in conventu totius Ecclesie exponi debeat & curari. *Origen. cited in P. 46.*

(v) See in our *Liturgy Exhortat. in the Communion-Office.*

other; and did either assign to the Penitent the proper Measure of his Punishment, or else upon a View of his Case did assure him, that he had not deserved it.

There was anciently therefore no *third* Sort of Practice, between *Publick Humiliation* and an *entire Release* from all Ecclesiastical Bonds; nor consequently any room for the Distinction now prevailing, between the *Court of Conscience*, and the *Court of exterior Jurisdiction*. Either the Penitent was obliged to take upon himself the Shame of his Sin in the Face of the Congregation; or else he was at Liberty to pursue his own Measures; however, he might think fit to take along with him the Advices of a *Ghostly Counsellor*; or might impose upon himself any *Discretionary Austerities*.

What we find in the Fathers concerning this Matter, can never support the present Doctrine and Practice of the Latin Church, as to *Private Penances*, obtruded for Laws obliging the Conscience.

The Cure, which they mention of Sins scarce avoidable (such as have been cited from (m) *Tertullian*, and were mentioned afterwards by *Austin*) can never, as I apprehend, come under the Notion of Punishment or Penance; since it would be a Scurvy Imputation upon the Piety of a Penitent, to suppose him mortified by *Alms*, or *Prayers*, or by any Obligations to *future Diligence in good Works*.

Yet these were then the only Methods of Cure for such Offences, as were not to be expiated by the *Publick Exomologesis*.

O 4

Upon

(m) See him cited in p. 196. & *Austin* in p. 115. Note (u), with *Ambrose* and *Pacian*, *ibid.* Notes (s), (t).

Upon the whole, I observe both of the one and of the other, that the *Direction* of the Penitent's Conscience, and the *Assignment* of his proper Penance, were entrusted originally with the same Hands; and that the Key which opened the Door of Heaven, was understood to open the Door of the Church.

SECT. IV. *Of the Variation of the Form in absolving, which from Deprecatory and Optative, grew about the same time with the preceding Change, to be Peremptory and Indicative.*

This had been no improper Consequence upon the preceding Change, had the *Indicative Form* been reserved to those who have now the Key of Jurisdiction, and as such profess only to exclude from, or restore to, the *External Privilege of Church-Communion*; but it seems abundantly less becoming, and less proper from the Mouth of those who profess to deal with the Conscience of the Sinner, and to restore him directly to the favour of God, by releasing him immediately from the Bond of Sin.

When the Administration of these two Offices was in one Hand, the Course was for Priest and People to intercede with God for the Pardon of the Penitent, and after the appointed Stations of Penance were gone through (x) he was by Imposition of Hands restored in full to the Communion and Peace of the Church.

What, or whether any, Form of Words was used at the Instant of so restoring him, besides the Intercessions which had all along been previous to such his Restoration, I have not been able to find

(x) See what is cited in p. 86, 87. Note (m)

find out, but am rather inclined to think there was none, and that his *Restoration* followed in Course, upon his having finished the *Term* assigned him for his Continuance under the *Penitential Discipline*: The *Constitutions* only direct that after the *Intercessions of the Church*, and the last *Imposition of the Bishop's Hands*, he should be suffered to remain in the same Fold with the rest. What the Form of *Intercession* was, the Reader may see in the Appendix (y). But then *this* was a Part of the constant and standing Service, for Penitents, during the whole Time of their being numbered with that *Order*; and so doth not seem peculiar to the Article of their *Restoration*.

Indeed had there been after *this* any other *Form* of restoring them to *Communion*, it might very properly have been *Indicative*, as an *Act* of direct Authority in the Officer who performed it; and so might have run thus; *I restore thee, I absolve thee*, or to the like Effect.

But in the *immediate Act* of *Pardon*, as applied directly to the Sinner's Conscience, the Case appears somewhat different, and where the Power is only Ministerial, it seems not (as I humbly apprehend) so reasonable nor decent for it, to carry the Face of *supream Magistracy*, nor of the highest and most direct Authority.

I have no where read, that any other Character was assigned in this Matter to the Priest, for very many Centuries after our Saviour and his Apostles, than that of *Intercessor*.

The

Jejunator

The Passages cited from (z) *Ambrose*, (a) *Chrysostom*, and (b) *Leo*, prove indeed this, and no more than this, to have been his just Character. The ancient Penitential Formularies, from that of (c) *Johannes Jejunator* among the Greeks, and from that of *Theodorus* among the Latins, to the 13th Century, are all of them Deprecatory; the Custom of expressing this in the Optative way, and in the third Person, was introduced gradually, and mixed with the Precatory Forms; not unlike to that Form of Absolution which the Priest uses in our Communion-Office just after the general Confession; and to this, in some Process of Time, was subjoined the present Indicative Form, *I Absolve thee*: But then this was at first introduced after a Prayer had been put up to God, for the Penitent's Forgiveness, much the same with that which our Church hath recommended in her Office for the Visitation of the Sick.

“ The Council of (d) *Trent* hath commend-
 “ ed the Use of Prayer in absolving, but hath
 “ at the same Time disowned the Necessity of it,
 “ asserting the proper Form and Essence of it to
 “ consist in these Words, *I Absolve thee*.”

Aqui-

(z) *Hominibus in remissionem peccatorum Ministerium suum exhibent, non jus alicujus potestatis exercent. Ambros. de Spiritu Sancto.*

(a) *Μερίτοι Θεοῦ καὶ τῶν πιστῶν αὐτοῦ. Chrysost. Hom. 3. de Incomprehens. Dei Naturā.*

(b) Pro delictis penitentium Precator accedit. *Leo in Epist. 80.*

(c) See in *Append. No. 5, 6.*

(d) Quibus quidem verbis (viz. *Ego te absolvo*) de Ecclesie sanctae more, preces quaedam laudabiliter adjunguntur; ad ipsius tamen Formae Essentiam nequaquam spectant, neque ad ipsius Sacramenti administrationem sunt necessariae. *In Concil. Trident. Sessio. 14. Cap. 3.*

Aquinas, upon the Question, *Whether the Form of the Sacrament of Penance doth not consist in these Words, I Absolve thee*, hath started more Objections against it, than he well knew how to answer; though the Times he lived in, obliged him to attempt it. He confesses, that (e) in some Absolutions, which were even then allowed of, the Form was still *Optative*, and not *Indicative*; he quotes a Passage from Pope (f) Leo the Great, which proves the Form in his time to have been by way of *Supplication*; he observes very justly, and argues from it very pertinently, that to *absolve from Sin*, is the very same with *remitting Sin*; but that God only remits Sin, who alone can cleanse the inner Man from it.

Thus he hath put the Objection fairly and strongly, and hath made no other Reply to it, than

(e) In quibusdam Absolutionibus, quæ in Ecclesiâ publicè fiunt, absolvens non utitur oratione *indicativa*, ut dicat, *Ego vos Absolve*; sed oratione *deprecativa*, cum dicit, *Misereatur vestri Omnipotens Deus*. Tho. Aquin. in Sum. Theolog. Part. 3. Quæst. 84. Art. 3.

(f) Leo Papa dicit, quod indulgentia Dei nisi *Supplicationibus* Sacerdotum nequit obtineri. Loquitur autem de indulgentiâ quæ præstatur, penitentibus. *Ibid. in Aquin.*

Idem est absolvere à peccato, quod peccatum remittere; sed solus Deus peccatum remittit, qui etiam solus interiùs hominem à peccato mundat, *Ibid.*

Ista formula assumitur ex ipsis verbis Christi, quibus Petro dixit, *Quodcumque solveris super terram, &c.* unde in sacramentali Absolutione, non sufficeret dicere, *Misereatur tui Omnipotens Deus*. Præmittitur tamen, etiam in sacramentali Absolutione, talis oratio, ne impediatur effectus Sacramenti ex parte penitentis. *Ibid.*

Verbum Leonis est intelligendum quantum ad deprecationem quæ præmittitur Absolutioni. *Ibid.*

Solus Deus per auctoritatem, & à peccato absolvit, & peccatum remittit; Sacerdotes tamen utrumque faciunt per ministerium, *Ibid.*

than the following faint one; *That the Commission was Peremptory (whatsoever ye shall loose, not whatsoever ye shall desire to have loosed) that Leo is to be understood of Prayer preparatory to Absolution (which though gratis dictum, yet proves by the way, that Prayer made then a Part of the Office in Absolving) and that God only remits Sin Authoritatively, but yet the Priest does it Ministerially (which is indeed true, though not, to his Point, Conclusive.)*

Morinus is more unreserved and free in his Acknowledgments of the Change, which the *Modern Practice* hath introduced upon the *Primitive*; to such a Degree, that he confesses, (g) *He could hardly lay down any one Proposition concerning the Reconciliation of Penitents, as practised among the Ancients, but what must contain somewhat very different from the Modern Usage; and in this particular concerning the Form it was of old expressed in, he hath clearly given it on the side of Prayer: All his Collections show it, till as low as the 12th Century, when, as he hath observed from (b) Alexander Halensis, there began a Mixture of the Deprecatory and Indicative ways in Conjunction with each other.*

(i) *The Priest (saith the aforementioned Halensis) sustains the double Capacity of Mediator from God*

(g) De reconciliatione pœnitentium unaquæque propositio aliquod huic tempori inusitatum continet. *Morin. de Pœnitent. lib. 9. Cap. 1. Sect. 1.*

(b) Ineunte sæculo duodecimo, medix cujusdam formulæ, quæ deprecatoria simul erat & indicativa, usus invaluit. *Ibid. in Lib. 8. Cap. 9. Sect. 27. b. see them in Append. No. 5. and 7.*

(i) Sacerdos per potestatem clavis Mediator est Dei ad hominem, & hominis ad Deum. Unde per ipsum peccator ascendit

God to Man; and from Man to God. By his means the Sinner ascends to God; and in this respect he (the Priest) is the Sinner's Mouth. As by his means likewise God descends to Man; and in that respect the Priest is the Mouth of God. In his Ascent to God, he performs the Part of an Inferior, and a Supplicant; but in descending from God to Man, he bears the Part of a Superior and a Judge. In the first way he is qualified for obtaining Grace by his Supplication on the Sinner's behalf. In the second way, his Province is reconciling the Sinner to the Church. In token of this, there is premised to the Formulary of Absolution, a Prayer by way of Deprecation; and then the Absolution (it self) follows, which is pronounced indicatively. The Prayer obtains it, the Absolution it self presupposes the Grace of Forgiveness. Since the Priest would never absolve, but upon a Presumption that the Party was already absolved by God.

The Passage here cited clearly shews us upon what Principles, and with the Help of what Distinctions, this Innovation was brought into the Church of Christ; that the *Indicative* way was only at first understood to reconcile to the Church,

ascendit ad Deum, & sic est Sacerdos os peccatoris, live loquens de peccatore; & per ipsum descendit Deus ad hominem, & sic est Sacerdos os Dei, eo quod separat pretiosum à vili. Secundum quod ascendit, habet se per modum inferioris & supplicantis; secundum quod descendit per modum superioris & judicantis. Secundum primum modum, potest *Gratiam impetrare*, & ad hoc est idoneus: Secundum secundum modum potest Ecclesie reconciliare; & ideo in signum hujus, in formà *Absolutionis* præmittitur *Oratio*, per modum *deprecativum*, & subjungitur *Absolutio* per modum *indicativum*. Et *deprecatio gratiam impetrat*, & *Absolutio gratiam supponit*, nunquam enim Sacerdos absolveret quenquam de quo non præsumeret, quòd esset absolutus à Deo. *Alexand. Halens. 4. part. Sum. Quest. 21. Memb. 1.*

Church, whilst the Deprecatory was what procured from God the Penitent's Pardon.

Even in this very Century there doth not appear to have been any settled Notion of the Priest's direct Agency in the Forgiveness of Sin, other than what followed upon his Administration of the Gospel-Ordinances.

Whether *Hugh* of *St. Victor*, or *Robertus Paululus*, were the Author of what is published under the Name of the former, by *Melchior Hittorp*, in his Collection of Divine Offices, they both of them flourished in this 12th Century, and therefore may, either of them, attest the current Usages and Tenets of it.

Thus therefore one of them is found expressing himself. (k) *God only forgiveth Sins; yet the Priests have a Portion of this Authority committed to them; in as much as God forgiveth by their Means and Ministry. But the Priests are said to forgive Sins, in regard to their Administration of those Ordinances, in and through which, Sins are remitted by Divine Authority; or else in regard to their loosing him who is bound in the Bond of Excommunication.*

Thus again, *Mr. Petit*, in his *Excerpta*, published with the Capitular of *Theodorus*, hath represented the Case of *Absolution* after much the same manner, from *MSS.* which are certainly

(k) Solus Deus peccata dimittit. Habent tamen auctoritates, quod Sacerdotes peccata dimittunt, & quod Deus per eos ea dimittit: sed Sacerdotes peccata dimittere dicuntur, quia Sacramenta ministrant, in quibus & per quæ peccata auctoritate divinâ dimittuntur. Vel ideo Sacerdotes peccata dimittere dicuntur, quia cum, qui pro peccatis suis Excommunicationis vinculo ligatus fuerat, absolvunt.

Hugh & St. Victor. Brudis. Theolog. in Specul. Eccles: apud Melchior. Hittorp. de Divinis Ecclesiæ Cathol. Offic.

ly of very modern Date, because they recite to us very modern Practices and Opinions.

(kk) What he hath taken from a MS. out of the Royal Library of Navarre, entitled *A Penitential Formulary*, hath acquainted us, that the Priest binds or looses, (1) *As he declares, or shews the Party to be bound or loosed; [which he does by the Key of Knowledge or Discernment;]* (2) *As he imposes or relaxes Canonical Penance.* (3) *As he exercises the Power of Excommunication, &c.* — Not a Word as yet of his applying a direct and peremptory Pardon.

Again, what the same Author hath published from the *Summ of Cardinal de Choron*, will inform us, that the Notions of *Absolution*, in the peremptory Way, had not generally obtained, when yet the Doctrine of Purgatory was current and established.

(kkk) There are (says he) two sorts of Binding and Loosing; one respecting the Crime, from which God alone can absolve; the other, respecting a four-fold Punishment; (1) Of Penance; (2) Of Excommunication; (3) Of Purgatory; And (4) Of Hell.
“ Concerning

(kk) Primò ligant, [Sacerdotes] id est, ostendunt aliquem ligatum & solutum. Secundus modus est ligandi, cum satisfactionem poenitentiae consentibus imponunt, vel solvendo de ea aliquid. Tertius modus ligandi est, qui fit per Excommunicationem, &c. Excerpt. 5. ex Codice MS. Bibliothec. Reg. Navar. sub titulo *Formularii Penitentialis*, apud Capitul. Theodor. Edit. per Mr. Petit.

(kkk) Est autem ligatio vel absolutio una culpæ, & ab illa solus Deus absolvit; alia poenæ quadruplicis; scilicet poenæ poenitentialis, poenæ excommunicationis, poenæ purgatorii, & poenæ gehennalis. A primâ absolvit Deus simul & Sacerdos, & ligat tam Deus quam Sacerdos. Similiter à secundâ — De tertiâ similiter dicimus — Ultimâ poenâ — semel ligatum nec Deus nec homo solvit — Hic ergo oritur

“ Concerning the three former of these, the
 “ Agency of the Priest, in Conjunction with
 “ that of God, was held available to the Pe-
 “ nitent’s Relaxation.”

“ But as to the Priest’s Agency in the Par-
 “ don of Sin, the Solution was, that *after* God
 “ had pardoned it, the Priest did in a certain
 “ manner pardon it *too*; in as much as he *dis-*
 “ *cerned* the Contrition of the Penitent, and
 “ *perceived* that God by his *own* Authority had
 “ cancelled all his Guilt. So that the Priest
 “ approved and ratified in *his* Court, what God
 “ had before determined in this Affair, and
 “ was, as it were, the Herald of God to pro-
 “ claim the Penitent’s Pardon; which Procla-
 “ mation was called the *Priest’s Remission of the*
 “ *Sin*; and was chiefly valuable for restoring
 “ the Party to the Privilege of Communion.”

Our Author, we see, was not wanting in
 good Will to the Priestly Function; but yet
 he was forced to fetch a Compass before he
 could give a good Account of this Matter; and
 even then did not venture to ascribe to the
 Priest

oritur quæstio, utrum Sacerdos dimittat peccata; cum
 auctoritas Augustini dicat, nemo dimittit peccata nisi
 solus Deus — Nos solventes dicimus, quòd aliud est forum
 poenitentiale, quòd est intra Ecclesiam militantem, &
 aliud est arcanum propitiationis & electionis divinæ, in
 quo Dominus, &c. — remittit omnia peccata poeniten-
 tis. Et postmodum Sacerdos in suo foro suum modum
 habet remittendi eadem peccata, quoniam ipse scilicet
 percipit contritionem in isto, & percipit quòd Deus omnia
 sua auctoritate dimisit in eo. Tunc siquidem approbat in
 suo foro & iudicio quòd Deus prius fecit, & quasi Preconis,
 voce ostendit dimissa peccata ipsius. Quæ ostensio hic dicitur
 remissio. Et hoc plurimum valet, quia per talem ostensio-
 nem recipitur in gremium Ecclesiæ, &c. *Ibid. Excerpt. 3.*
ex. Sum. Mri. Roberti de Chorcon, in Quæst. 3. de Clavibus.

Priest a direct or peremptory *Absolution* of the Penitent from his Sin.

But in the 13th Century it was apparently a ruled Case; that (kk) *Such as received the Confession of Penitents, should absolve them precisely in the Form subjoined;* “By the Authority vested “ in me, I ABSOLVE thee from thy “ Sins.”

This was the Constitution of Cardinal *Othobon*, in a National Council held at *St. Paul's London*; and thenceforwards the Form hath all along been *Indicative*.

Morinus hath proved by a whole Cloud of Witnesses, that the ancient Forms of *Absolution* ran all in the way of *Intercession*; yet hath he most strangely concluded that way to be now *invalid*, and for no better Reason than (kk) *because we are now got into another Custom, which is approved by wise Men, and not disallowed by the Pope; and which may not therefore in such Circumstances be baulked, or altered, without defeating the Efficacy of the Ordinance so administered.*

P

I do

(kk) *Omnes autem, qui Confessiones aliquorum audiunt, à peccatis expressè confitentes absolvant, verba subscripta specialiter exprimentes, Ego te à peccatis tuis, auctoritate quâ fungor, Absolvo. Constitut. Dom. Othobon. in Concil. Angl. A.D. 1268. apud Lyndwood.*

(kk) *Inveterascente autem istà consuetudine, (viz. formæ Indicativæ) quæ ante annum Christi 1300. non obtinuit; Doctores celebres & multi definierunt Absolutionem Deprecativo modo datam non valere; meâ quidem sententiâ rectè; non enim tantum concilia aut pontificum decreta leges absolvendis peccatoribus præscribere possunt, quorum prævaricatio irritam facit absolutionem; sed etiam id facit consuetudo, pontifice non improbante, secundùm responsa prudentum legitimè inducta. Morin. de Penitent. Lib. 8. Cap. 8. §. 2.*

I do not any where remember to have read a Passage, favouring so strongly of an implicit Subjection, as this very submissive one of our learned Author ; which in *him* is the more surprising, because his Representations, for the Main, are Candid and Ingenuous.

Great indeed is the Power of Custom, if it shall not only warrant a notorious Departure from the constant Usages of the Church in her purest Ages ; but shall likewise improve it into an unalterable Law, and make our Return to the Point, *from whence we are fallen*, impracticable and unlawful.

This is the surest way which could ever have been invented, to render it impossible for the Church to err, if she can confute the Charge of Error (in a Doctrine) by a meer avowing, that she *at present* holds it.

The Author of *Sure-footing* might have spared himself the trouble he was at, to prove *the indefectible Certainty of Oral Tradition*, if he had been aware, that the *Rule of lawful and Right*, was the *present Custom of the Church*. He needed not have been at any Pains to prove, that she *could* not hold in *one* Age what she *had* not held in *another*, if the barely *holding* it in *one*, might be thought sufficient to establish and defend it, for the time in which she *beld* it.

Our Church is far more modest in her Pretensions, and confesses, that (1) *there was in the primitive Times a Godly Discipline* ; the Want of which she laments in her own, and wishes for its Revival.

In

(1) See our Communion-Office.

In her Office for the Visitation of the Sick, she hath chosen indeed the *indicative Form* (*I absolve thee*) for the Penitent's Absolution; perhaps in Compassion, to the great Distress she supposed the Penitent at *that time* to lie under, she might judge an extraordinary Measure of Comfort the fitter to be (*then*) applied to him.

However in the primitive Ages, the Course which was used with Sick-bed Penitents, hath been shewn to be, *assigning them Penance* (which, if they lived, they were bound to go through, or else to be excommunicate) and *restoring them*, in the Interim, *to the Peace of the Church*, from a Presumption, that they would submit, upon their Recovery, to the Penance thus assigned them; and then, if they died, they left the World with some Satisfaction, that all Hope of their Case was not judged *desperate*, though it was far enough still from being altogether safe (11).

Now as to the *Pardon of Sin* (having on my side the entire Suffrage of Antiquity) I must have leave from *Morinus*, and from all the Writers who are with him in this Point, to intimate my humble Opinion, that the Power of the Priest is *mediate* and *ministerial*, (not *direct* nor *judicial*) and therefore that in his Exercise of it, the Form should be rather *precatory* than *peremptory*. But in *restoring a Man to the Peace of the Church* (which he may have *ipso facto* forfeited, though Sentence hath never, perhaps, been denounced against him) *there* the Form may more warrantably be *Indicative*.

P 2

In

(11) See what hath been written and cited in Pag. 105, 106. Notes (d) (e) (f) (g) (h).

In the Office just cited, our Church hath used both the Forms, the one Introductory to the other; the *Optative* is first used; *Our Lord Jesus Christ of his great Mercy forgive thee, &c.* And then follows the *Indicative*; *By his Authority I absolve thee, &c.* So that in the One a Pardon is begged for the Penitent, and in the other applied to him.

Yet presently after, the Priest and Penitent are both directed to renew their Prayers for the latter's Forgiveness, and to beg that he may be continued in the Unity of the Church. The Reader will find the Substance of this Prayer (*m*) in the Penitential of *Ecbert*, Archbishop of *Tork*, to have been one of the ancient Formularies for *Clinical Absolution*; though in our Liturgy it is used as a Prayer subsequent to the *indicative* Form of absolving the sick Penitent.

It looks as if our Church intended by this *Indicative* Form, only the Restoration of the Penitent to her Peace and Communion, in as much as in the Prayer subjoined to it, a Request is specially made, that God would continue this sick Member in the Unity of the Church.

'Tis true indeed, that the Priest professes to absolve him from all his Sins; and 'tis as true, that immediately afterwards he begs of God not to impute them; so that whether he absolves *mediately* or *immediately*; whether by a *direct Application of the Pardon to the Conscience of the Sinner*; or by the *Medium of admitting him to the (forfeited) Privilege of Church-Communion*, the Form hath not determined. And therefore (I presume, with all humble Deference) we may so interpret

(*m*) See in *Append. No. 7.*

pret the Meaning of our Church, as will best enable us to defend her, and to shew her Agreement with *primitive* Examples.

The Nature of the thing I conceive will bear it ; since she hath not decisively given her Opinion upon this Matter ; nor need we put any Force upon her Words to bring them within our present Construction. Yet it must at last be confessed, that our Case would be more clearly and fully justifiable, as infinitely more agreeable to the *ancient Model*, if we had any Use of the *Penitential Discipline* upon such a Person's Recovery ; and if we adhered more closely to the *Forms* which were indubitably of ancient Date: But this must be left to further Time, and to a fit Authority.

Mean while, I observe upon this, and such other Changes as Time may have introduced into the *Penitential Discipline*, That in every thing *not essential* to it, the Pastors of the Church are entrusted with a discretionary Power, of abridging or extending it, of complying, forbearing, condescending, or insisting, as Occasions and Conjunctions shall render it adviseable.

Now what is *essential*, or what is *not* so, must be determined from its *Necessity*, or *no Necessity*, to the Accomplishment of the *Ends* designed by it. What these were the Reader hath (n) already been advertised ; and shall now therefore be no further troubled with a Repetition of them, otherwise than with observing thence ;

1. That the Honour of the Church, as the Spouse of Christ, can never be consulted ; that

P 3

the

(n) See what hath been written and cited in *Pag. 83. Notes (c) (d) (e) (f) (g).*

the Design of Christ in gathering a Church (which was *purifying to himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works*) can never be promoted, whilst her most Sacred Ordinances are prostituted to People, either of scandalous Lives, or, who stand at an avowed Defiance against her Authority. This is an *End*, which can never (I fear) be answered, whilst there is an utter Neglect of all *Penitential Discipline*. The Church will have *Spots, and Blemishes, and Wrinkles*, if she takes no Care of cleansing them; and so will disappoint her Founder of his gracious Purpose, *viz.* the presenting it to himself and to his Father, *Holy and without Blemish*. Again,

2. The Example to others will carry no Influence, where no Example is made of *notorious Offenders*: Where the Door to Ordinances is always open, none will fear to be excluded; nor will any be afraid to offend, who shall observe that no Conditions of Pardon are insisted on; or at most, that they are cheap and easie, and carry no Pain nor Shame along them. And

3. The Delinquent himself must loose the Advantage propounded for him by *Penitential Mortifications*, where none are made requisite; and where he is allowed (without them) to approach the Ordinance appointed for his Sin's Remission.

But now, though an *entire* Neglect of this *Discipline* will carry with it these untoward Consequences; yet will not every Instance of a Departure from the *ancient Practice* be justly chargeable with such a total Neglect.

It were highly indeed desirable, that it might be restored in every Part and Branch of it; and that we might be brought, in all *Points*, to resemble

resemble that *primitive Pattern*, which hath here been represented. But if this cannot be obtained, it were better, at least, to stand as we do, than to run any further back from it; if we cannot have the *publick Exomologesis*, and a *publick Reconciliation in the Face of the Church*; it were better, that some Shadow of this should, however, be left in the *private Management between Priest and People*. It were better the Sinner should take to himself the *Shame of opening his Wounds* to a *Spiritual Physician*, than that they should be suffered to *wrangle and to fester*, through an *entire Neglect* of them; that the *Ministry of Reconciliation* should in some way or other be applied to him, though with less of Solemnity, and perhaps therefore less of Profit both to himself and others; than that it should not be applied at all.

The *reformed Churches abroad* do generally concur with ours *at home* in this Apprehension, and in this Opinion.

The *Augustan Confession* may be allowed to represent, in a good measure, the Sense of the *German Churches*: Especially, if we add to it the Opinion of *Chemnitius*, who hath clearly enough delivered it.

The former of these hath acquainted us; that (o) *Since Confession makes way for private Ab-*

P 4

solution;

(o) Cum autem confessio præbeat locum impertiendæ abolutioni *privatim*; & ritus ipse intellectum potestatis clavium & remissionis peccatorum conservet in populo; præterea cum illud colloquium magnopere prosit ad monendos & erudiendos homines, diligenter retinemus in Ecclesiis confessionem; sed ita ut doceamus enumerationem delictorum non esse necessariam jure divino, nec onerandam esse conscientias illà enumeratione. *In Augustan. Confess. de Confession.*

solution ; and since the Administration of that Rite preserves in the People a just Apprehension of the Power of the Keys, and of the Remission of Sins ; and since (moreover) that sort of Conference and Communication between Priest and People, doth mightily tend to the Instruction and Edification of the latter ; therefore, they of that Persuasion were very careful to retain in their Churches the Use of Confession, though they did not extend it to the burdening of their Consciences, by teaching the Necessity of any exact or circumstantial Enumeration of their Sins, as required from them by Divine Institution.

And this is just the Sense of *Chemnitius*, who is for preserving the Use of it upon much the same Account, *viz.* (p) *That by such private Conferences, the Pastor may come to a Knowledge of his People's Proficiency in the Faith ; and of the State of their Souls ; in order to their due Absolution.*

In the Case of *Anxiety or Scruple*, (q) *Calvin hath directed an Application to the Pastor in the way of private Confession ; and hath commended it as a Remedy provided by our Lord, and as such not to be neglected.*

(p) *Privata confessionis usus apud nos servatur, ut generali professione peccati, & significatione pœnitentiæ petatur absolutio. Cumque non sine judicio usurpanda sit clavis, vel solvens vel ligans, in privato illo colloquio pastores explorant auditorum judicia, &c. — Et tali confessioni impertitur absolutio. Chemnit. Exam. Concil. Trident. in Sess. 14. Cap. 5. de Confession.*

(q) *Id officij sui unusquisque fidelium meminerit, si ita privatim angitur & affligatur peccatorum sensu, ut se explicare nisi alieno adjutorio nequeat, non negligere quod illi a Domino offertur remedium ; nempe, ut ad se sublevandum privatâ confessione apud suum pastorem utatur. Calvin. Institut. Lib. 3. Cap. 4. Sect. 12. — Nec minoris efficaciz aut fructus est privata absolutio, ubi ab ijs petitur, qui singulari remedio ad infirmitatem suam opus habent. Ibîd. in Sect. 14.*

neglected without Breach of Duty. To which he hath subjoined his Opinion of private Absolution, that it is of no less Use and Efficacy than the former; wherever it is wanted in Aid, or in Cure of any singular Infirmity.

Zanchy hath likewise born his Testimony to the Advantages of private Confession; (r) If you take away its Abuses; Such as (1) the Opinion of its Necessity. (2) All Scrupulosity in the Enumeration of Sins. (3) All Superstitious Conceits concerning it; He agrees that it will (then) in many Respects be useful, viz. (1) For the Self-abasement of the Sinner. (2) For a two-fold Doctrine, concerning Sin, and concerning Faith. (3) For the Penitent's Comfort, by the Pastor's applying to him the Word of God, concerning the Remission of his Sins through Faith in Christ. (4) For Counsell. (5) For Prayer, that the Pastor may thereby be moved to intercede with God in a peculiar manner for him. As to Absolution, he assigns three sorts of it; (1) That of direct Authority, which only belongs to God. (2) That which is Ministerial, and was vested in the Apostles, and from thence derived upon all the Ministers of God's Word. (3) That of private Right;

(r) Multas secum talis Confessio adfert utilitates, viz. Si absit (1) Necessitatis opinio, (2) Scrupulosa singulorum peccatorum enumeratio, (3) Omnis superstitio—Debent ij esse fines Confessionis, (1) Tui confusio—(2) Doctrina duplex, una de peccatis, altera de fide—(3) Consolatio—ut scilicet pastor conscientiam tuam erigat pronunciato nimirum verbo Evangelij, Remittuntur tibi peccata tua per fidem in Christum—(4) Consilium—(5) Oratio—ut Pastor pro te peculiariter ad Deum rogandum incitetur—Triplex est remittendi peccati potestas—una est *Authoritatis*, viz. Dei—altera *Ministerij*, viz. Apostolorum, & nunc omnium Ministrorum verbi. Tertia privati cujusque juris, viz. quâ frater fratri condonare vel retinere potest. Zanch. in Explicat. 1 Epist. Joban. 1 Cap.

Right ; whereby one Brother may remit to another the Offence he may have given him.

Our own Divines have so clearly all along in this Point been with me ; and the avowed Doctrine of our Church doth so apparently confirm their Sentiments, that I shall not detain my Reader with a needless Recital of the one or of the other ; but instead of it, shall crave leave to express my Wonder, that such loud Outcries should be made against those of our *present Writers*, who have laboured to revive the Credit of this exploded (yet useful) Doctrine.

They do (none of them) I am persuaded, mean, that the primitive Practice should continue out of Fashion, but only that, if we cannot have it in its highest Perfection, we should have (however) as much of it, as we can ; and should make as near Approaches as may be, to the *ancient Model*.

The *private Confession* is manifestly of old Standing, and approaches very near the *Fountain* ; and though as far as I have yet been able to learn of it, it had, till the Time of Pope *Leo*, an apparent Reference to the *outward and publick Discipline* of the Church ; yet every Case (which was in secret revealed to the Priest) did not, it is evident, come upon the *publick* Stage, nor had *publick Penance* assigned to it ; but only such Sins were so treated, as the Priest, upon Knowledge of them, should judge proper for a *Publication*.

Wherefore then should either the Man or the Doctrine be exploded, which pleads for the Continuance of such a Practice ; or which would recommend to us the Advantages derivable from it, though we cannot expect the *full Measure of those Advantages*, without coming up

up to the *full Measures of that Practice*, which derived them upon the ancient Church? *Some Benefit* we may certainly reap from the *Practice*, though we can propose to our selves neither the *one*, nor the *other*, in its full Dimensions.

As to *private Absolutions*, our Account of them is, I confess more *modern*: for as the old *private Confessions* had Reference to *publick Discipline*, there was no need of solemn *Absolution*, if the Sins were of such a Nature as to be curable without *Penance*; since as there was *then* no *binding*, there could properly be no *loosing*.

But yet surely the *modern Practice* (as pleaded for in our Church) is capable of a very useful Accommodation to the *ancient Usage*, though it doth not exactly, nor in all Points, conform to it. For the Priest may here assign the Party who confesses to him, certain *Penitential Mortifications*, though they be not *publickly* submitted to in the Face of the Church, and he may insist with him upon a Time of Probation, before he restores him; and within all that Period, he may use his Office of *Intercession* to God for him, and then, when the Term is expired, he may *loose* the Penitent from his *Bond*, and may *solemnly restore him to his former Station*. And if this were moreover done before a few chosen Witnesses, who *fear God*, it still would bear a nearer Resemblance to the ancient Practice. For the Church (as (s) *Tertullian* hath observed) may *subsist in a few of her Members*; and with *two or three assembled in his Name* (t), our Saviour hath promised his gracious *Presence*, and (which

(s) In uno & altero Ecclesia est. *Tertull. de Penit. Cap. 10.*

(t) *Matt. xviii. 18, 20.*

(which to our Purpose is somewhat remarkable) that Promise follows close upon the Powers he had just before granted to his Disciples, of *binding and loosing*.

The *Redemption of Penance* by various *Commutions* is indeed an entire Corruption ; and yet perhaps it were more adviseable, that Men should be *fined* for their Sins, than that they should escape with a total Impunity. Especially if the Design of our (u) late Convocation should ever be made effectual, for applying such Money to Purposes truly useful : I believe, I know those in the World, who would esteem a *smart Fine* the *forest Mortification*, which could have been well or easily invented for them. And though this will not answer the Purposes of true Repentance, which should always be preceded by a *Godly Sorrow* ; yet it may be subservient to the Ends of good Order and Government ; and thus, how improper soever it may be to the Discipline of the Church, it is no way foreign from that of the State ; which may entrust the Management of it in what Hands it pleases, without any just Imputation.

The Separation of the two Jurisdictions is likewise very *Modern*, and cannot in this Case be thoroughly vindicated ; nor is it indeed within my Intention, to justify any one Instance of Departure from the *Ancient Pattern*. But yet since all *cannot* be had, which we *would* have, we should keep at least what we have, and not represent things to be worse than they really are.

Now

(u) See the Substance of a Report drawn up by a Committee of the lower House, brought into it, and received by it. *Jul. 1. 1713. Pag. 17.*

Now I humbly conceive, that the *Bishop*, from the Design of Christ, who founded the Church, is the *Minister* of the *Penitential Discipline*; and that *all*, who act in it by his *Authority*, whether devolved upon them *occasionally* only, or *perpetually*; to *some Purposes*, or to *all*; for a *Term*, or for *Life*; may be permitted to execute it, whensoever or howsoever granted; (v) as *Deacons* heretofore were in certain Cases warranted to do by the *Bishop's Order*.

The *Indicative* and *Peremptory way* of *absolving* is also agreed to be of small Standing in the Church; and not much above 500 Years old. But if we take it as an *Act successive* to *Prayer*; and supposing the *Effect* of the *preceding Intercession*; or if we consider it (in another Light) as an *Authoritative Restoration* of the Party to the *Communion of the Church*; though then indeed I see *Novelty* in it; yet it will be hard to discern any *fatal Mischief*.

We use it but once; and *that* is in our Office for the Visitation of the Sick; in which Case, we should (as I humbly apprehend) (vv) insist with the Penitent, that upon his *Recovery*, he do submit to a Course of Discipline, before he approach the Holy Communion; which will bring up the Case to a pretty near Resemblance with that of the *ancient Clinical Absolutions*.

However, as in every one of the forementioned Articles, there hath been a confessed
De-

(v) See what is cited to this Purpose from St. *Cyprian*, in p. 193. Note (l.)

(vv) See Appendix. No. 1. Note (i) and *ibid.* No. 7. and p. 105. of this Treatise, Note (f).

Departure of the *Modern* from the *Primitive Example*, I shall no otherwise take upon my self the Defence of them, nor any of them ; than only in Answer to some rude Clamours, which have been poured upon them ; and which would charge them not only with *Novelty*, but also with *Sin*. This I conceive, is to raise a Noise and a Dust ; but it testifies no sincere Desire of Cure or of Amendment.

Yet at last, if any one, in the Spirit of Meekness, shall duly propound and desire a Reformation of them, he hath my hearty Concurrence, and best Wishes, and therewith, in the following Chapter, my humble Endeavours.

C H A P. IV.

Whether a Revival of the Primitive Discipline may be practicable, and how far it may be so, if it shall seem good to Authority to make the Trial.

WHoever shall go about to straighten the Reins of Discipline, or shall attempt to revive the Rigours of former and better Ages, must expect to encounter *two* sorts of Adversaries ; the *one* sort is of those, who know little or nothing of what was *before* them, and are therefore content to take every thing upon Trust, as they find it received and used in the *present* Generation. The *other* sort is of those, who are apprehensive for themselves, and for their Vices, that the *Revival* of *Discipline* would bear hard upon *both*.

The Opposition to be expected from the *former* is founded in *Ignorance*, as that from the *latter* is in *Sin* ; though both perhaps may combine

bine in *exploding*, what will appear *Novel* to the one, and *Grievous* to the other.

The Imputation of *Novelty* will little affect me, who rather think it, in Point of Justice, chargeable upon those Practices, which have departed from *Antiquity*. Nor will the Inconveniences, which any Man shall apprehend or feel from what is here propounded, very much concern me; who am ready to answer in the Case of *Spiritual Magistracy*, what St. Paul did in the Case of *Temporal*; That (w) *Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil; wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have Praise of the same. For he is the Minister of God to thee for Good. But if thou do that which is Evil, Be afraid; for he beareth not the Sword in vain; for he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth Evil.*

But that which indeed most sensibly touches me in my Entrance upon this Chapter; is an Apprehension of invading a *Superior Province*; and of *dictating* to those from whom I shall be always most willing to *learn*.

When these Papers shall see the Light, the Convocation may very probably be sitting; and, for ought I know, may be debating the Subject, which the Thred of my Argument leads me now to write upon.

If this should prove the Case, I have nothing left me, but to beg their favourable Acceptance and candid Construction of what shall be here propounded (I am sure) with a good and honest Purpose, and without the least Design of
anticipating,

(w) *Rom. xiii. 3, 4.*

anticipating, or interfering with, their Consultations; but (much on the contrary) with all possible Deference to the Wisdom of their venerable Body.

It is therefore with the greatest Humility, and with all Submission to *Superior Authority* propounded,

I. "That the Laws respecting Discipline, which are at present in Being, be re-inforced, and pointed with some new Sanction."
(ww) The Curate at present seems to have a Power of separating *notorious Offenders* from the Holy Communion, till they have given Satisfaction for the Offence they have been guilty of. But after such a long *Disease*, and such a *continued (Universal) Neglect of Discipline*, the Burden of *reviving* it ('tis humbly apprehended) will be too weighty for the Shoulders of any private Priest; except the higher Powers shall both lend him their Help to *lighten* it; and shall interpose with *fresh Authority* to *exact* it from him. The People then will see, that what he doth, proceeds from no Pique nor private Regards; but comes from him in pure Obedience to Authority; which he must pay at his own Peril; or abide the Consequence of his own Neglect.

Indeed as our Laws now stand; the Clergy have a melancholly Time of it; between the Apprehensions of offending either *God*, or *Man*; though I persuade my self, whenever this Difficulty shall come in their way, that they will have no Doubt upon their Minds, which is the *greater Hazard*, or which of the two is the *lighter Evil*.

Chrysostom

(ww) See the Rubrick before our *Communion Office*.

Chrysostom hath told them, (ww) that it is no small Penalty which they shall incur, if they suffer any to partake of the holy Table, whom they know to be guilty of deadly Sin, and that the Blood of such shall be required at their Hands : that therefore if any General of an Army, or a Consul, or even the Emperor himself should offer to approach under such Circumstances, they were boldly to oppose his Admission, as being vested (for such Purposes) with a Power superior to any Earthly Potentates.

But now among *st us*, it is somewhat doubtful; whether if a Sinner of the first Magnitude should offer himself at the Holy Table, for any secular Qualification, the Minister repelling him, might not be exposed to some legal Penalty, or at least to the Expence and Hazard of a troublesome Prosecution, for doing his Duty; and for refusing to admit even *notorious Sinners*.

This therefore is a Case, which (with all Submission) seems to stand in need of some further Explication; and the legal Powers of the Clergy should here (it is humbly apprehended) be clearly stated, and unexceptionably ascertained.

“ 2. That some Brand be fixed upon the Practice of joining in the other Parts of Publick Worship, and of departing from it, without the Reception of the blessed Sacrament.”

Q

(x) *Clemens*

(ww) 'Ου μικρὴ κόλασις ὑμῖν ἔσται, εἰ συνιδότες τινὶ ἁμαρτίαν, συγχωρήσῃτε μελαγχρὴν ταύτης ἢ ἡρεπίζης· τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν ἐκζητήσιν· τῶν ὑμετέρων· καὶ ἡ σεβητός τις ἢ, καὶ ὑπαρχῶν, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ τὸ δῶδῆμα ὀφειλόμενον, ἀναξίως ὢ θεοσεύῃ, κώλυσον, μελῖονα ἐκείνου ἢ ἡρεσίαν ἔχεις. *Chrysostom*. In *Matth.* 26. *Homil.* No. 83. See also what is cited to this Purpose from the *Constitutions* in p. 83. Note (c).

(x) *Clemens Alexandrinus*, hath indeed a Passage, which seems to leave the People at Liberty in this Matter. He is observing, "That every Man should judge of his own Abilities, whether he be fit to be a Teacher of others, or not;" *Fast as some* (saith he) *after the Customary Division of the Eucharistical Elements, leave it upon the Consciences of their People, whether they will take their Part, or not. And the best Rule to determine them, in their Participation, or Forbearance, He observes to be their own Conscience: As, the surest Foundation for Conscience to proceed upon in this matter, was a good Life joined with a suitable Measure of Proficiency in the Knowledge of the Gospel.*

This must therefore be confessed a Testimony, which proves what the Custom of *some Churches* was in this Affair; and should silence, I conceive, the Complaints of those, who bear so hard upon our present Practice, for our *Promiscuous* Admission of *All*, who offer themselves. Since we do no more, than what was done in *some Churches*, within the second, or at most the Beginning of the third Century; and what was done in those Churches, is far enough from being mentioned with Disadvantage, by an Author of very great Account in those earlier Ages.

But yet it may not be denied, that the more general Usage was *different*; nor does this Testimony mention the Case, but with a Note of Reserve, and

(x) Ἡ δὲ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τινὲς ἀναίμαρτες, ὡς εἶπεν, αὐτὸν δὴ ἕκαστον τῶ λαοῦ λαβεῖν τὸ μῆλον ἐπιστήπῃσι· ἀρετῇ δὲ θεῷ τὸ ἀρετῇ ἀρετῇ τὸ ἡ γυνή, ἡ συνέδριος· δευτερίῳ δὲ αὐτῶν βέλαιον, ὁρῶν βίον, ὁμα μαδύον, τῇ κατὰ δόξαν
Clem. Alexand. Stromat. Lib. 1.

entirely wrong in this whole Matter ; that although they would come at *Easter* with any Hazard, and even in a State of utter Unfitness for approaching to the Holy Table ; yet at other Times they could not be brought to it, though there were no Reason for their abstaining ; that therefore he stood in vain at the Altar, if no one would come near it, and if none would communicate. Not that he was for pressing them to come without being fit for it, but rather for persuading them, *first* to a *due Preparation*, and *then* to a *regular Attendance*. In as much as if they were not fit for the Holy Sacrament, they were indeed unfit to *communicate* in *Prayer*. He exclaims upon the Perverseness of the contrary Practice (*then* it seems, obtaining) and upon the Absurdity of the Deacon's making the *usual Proclamation*, *All you depart who are in a State of Penance* ; from which it might reasonably be concluded, that *all* were in a State of Penance, who did not *communicate*. Now (continues the Father) if you are indeed in a State of Penance, you ought not to *receive* ; (as Penitents may not) why therefore do you boldly stay behind, when the Deacon proclaims, (yy) *All you depart who*

ἃ, μελαγχρῶν ἐκ ὀφείλων· ὁ δὲ μὴ μελεχὼν ἐν μελανόια ὅτι·
 τίς δὲ ἐπεκεν λέγει, Ἀπέλθετε οἱ μὴ δυνάμενοι δευδύναμι, σὺ
 ὃ ἐσικας ἰταμῶς ; ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν, ἀλλὰ τῶν δυνάμενων
 μελεχων, ἢ ἐδὲν φεγγίλης. Chrysostom. in Epist. Ephes.
 Hom. 3.

(yy) *N. B.* The Solemn Liturgy, called by way of Eminence, the Prayer, was the Privilege of the faithful only ; the Catechumen's and Penitents were not permitted to join in it ; as being always accompanied with the Holy Eucharist ;

who are not permitted to joyn in Prayer? And
 “yet indeed you are not of this Number; but
 “may, if you will, communicate; only you
 “take no Notice of your Priviledge, and
 “will not regard it.” Thus far our Author —

In the very Beginning of the fifth Century, we find by the Provisions made against it, that this Abuse was very far extended; and accordingly the first Council of *Toledo*, (2) directed the Persons who were found thus tardy, to submit to Penance.

The same Provision was again renewed in the following Century, by the second Council of *Luca*; (a) that *whoever should enter the Church, and turn his Back upon the Holy Communion, should be expelled from the Church, till he had done Penance for his Fault, and reformed it, and thereby deserved the Favour of being re-admitted to Communion.*

Q 3

Those

so that none might partake of the one, who were not admitted to the other. The Order of the publick Service in the *Primitive Church* plainly shews this, of which the Reader may see a short Sketch in *Append. No. 1. Note (a).*

(2) De his qui intrant Ecclesiam, & deprehenduntur nunquam communicare, admoneantur, ut si non communicant, ad poenitentiam accedant. In 1. Concil. Toletan. Can. 13. *Habit. A. D. 400.*

(a) Si quis intrat Ecclesiam Dei & sacras Scripturas [* non] audit, & pro luxuria sua avertit se à communionem Sacramenti, & in observandis mysterijs declinat constitutam regulam disciplinæ, istum talem projiciendum de Ecclesia Catholica esse decernimus, donec poenitentiam agat, & ostendat fructum poenitentiae suae, ut possit Communionem perceptâ indulgentiâ promereri. In Concil. Lucens. 2do Can. 83. *Habit. A. D. 572.* * N. B. *Labbée and Binus, though they both retain the Word [non] yet do both Mark it with an Asterisk as redundant.*

Those who were entitled to the Privilege of Communion (the *Faithful*, or the *Perfect*, as they were *anciently* called) had a *Station* assigned them near the Altar distinct from the rest; in which none might place themselves, who were not *so* entitled, as Penitents and Catechumens were not.

Our Chancells, however, in the first Design of them reserved to the Clergy, might very fitly be appropriated to some such Purpose; and though the present Use of them denotes them to be Badges rather of *Secular*, than of *Ecclesiastical* Distinction; yet if they were applied to the Support of Discipline and Order; and if none but Communicants were allowed to be placed in them, there would be a better Face amongst us, than we can *now* observe of the *Primitive Regimen*; which had ever more Regard to the *Manners* of Men, than to their *Estates*, and paid more Deference to the *Purity* of their *Lives*, than to the *Elegance* of their *Dress*, or to any exterior Honours, which might (*elsewhere*) be due to them.

In those Times, if any despised their Privilege, or would not make use of it; we have seen, that it was taken from them; and they were degraded thence to a lower *Station* in the Church. *Isidore Hispalensis* hath (aa) already been cited to inform the Reader; That "it was the Door-keeper's Province to see the People properly distributed into their respective *Stations*;" So that the *Distinction* continued down to the 7th Century.

It were much to be wished, and is therefore most humbly propounded,

3. "That

(aa) See him cited in Pag. 155. Note (g).
Fideles recipiat; excommunicatos & infideles excipiat.

3. "That somewhat of this kind might be now revived; that the Receivers of the Holy Communion might have some Place assigned them in our Churches, distinct from those who should not communicate. And for such a Purpose, that we might have some use in our religious Assemblies of the *ancient Stations*, where *notorious Offenders* might be as *separate* from the rest in their *Places*, as they are in their *Manners*; and that even *secret Sinners* (if known to the Priest) should not be allowed to mix with the *Faithful*."

In the primitive Church we have seen, that *Penitents* and *Catechumens*, as they had *distinct Stations*, so had *distinct Parts* of the publick Service fitted for them; at the Conclusion of which they severally departed.

As to *Catechumens*, the main Use and Reason of that Order, and of all the Regimen relating to it, hath long since ceased, in those Countrys, where *all* profess the Religion of Christ; and have therefore been baptized whilst they were too young for doing, or undertaking any thing in their own Names. Only it might still be preserved with regard to Adults desiring Baptism. But for the rest, it might (I conceive) even at *this* time be serviceable to the Interests of Religion, if the *Candidates for Confirmation*, had some such *Station* assigned to them, as heretofore belonged to the *Candidates for Baptism*; if *thetaking out* their *Freedoms in the Gospel*, were preceded by certain *Solemn Stages*; and if they ascended thus gradually to the Priviledge of Communion, to the *Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ*.

An Office might easily be composed for this Purpose; or if a Prayer were added to the daily Service,

Service, which should be considered as Preparatory to the *Office of Confirmation*; it would make (perhaps) that *Rite* more *awful* and more *solemn*; better considered, and better understood, than it is at present.

And, as we have now, by the Change of our Circumstances, and by the general Diffusion of the Gospel amongst us, no *Solemn Preparation for the Ordinance of Baptism*, it might help to render our Youth more sensible of that sacred Engagement, if they were in some such manner trained up to the Susception of it upon themselves, and thence were admitted in full to the highest Priviledges of the Gospel.

Upon the Mention of Baptism, I shall here beg leave to detain my Reader with a short Digression, and to suggest to him, that, "If the *Seasons* for Baptism were still preserved, out of which it should not (ordinarily) be lawful to administer that Solemn Ordinance; the Office, I conceive, would appear the more Venerable, when Numbers should contribute to heighten the Sense of its Importance, and its Dignity."

It would not be the least Convenience attending such a Regulation, that the present (scandalous) Practice of *Private Baptisms* would entirely be removed by it; wherever there should be no Plea of *Sickness* nor *Danger* to excuse or enforce it. (And *there* it should in the strictest Sense be *Private*). Nor should we then appear, so much as now we do, to be ashamed of our Religion, and of professing before Men what Master we belong to. Nor would the *Midwife* then vye Offices with the Priest, who seem according to modern Estimation to be of equal Account in these domestick Solemnities, where

where the Giving a Name passes with many for the main Design of the Ceremonial.

(b) *Tertullian* hath clearly and expressly told us, "That the Church, in his Time, was accustomed to observe these *Seasons*, for the Solemn Administration of this Holy Ordinance; and by way of Abatement, hath only subjoined, that Baptism administered at any Time was valid, and that the Grace of God, conveyed by it, was *always* open." i. e. Indeed, when any Case required it out of these Solemn Seasons, it might effectually and lawfully be administered.

(bb) *Pamelius* in his Notes upon the Place, hath proved from undeniable Authorities, as well Ancient, as Modern; from *Ambrose* and *Basil*, and *Jerom*,

(b) *Diem Baptismo Solenniorem Pascha præstat, cum Passio Domini in qua tingimur adimpleta est, &c. — Exinde Pentecoste ordinandis lavacris latissimum spatium est, quo & Domini resurrectio inter Discipulos frequentata est, & gratia Spiritus sancti dedicata, & spes adventus Domini subostensa, &c. — Cæterum omnis dies Domini est, omnis hora, omne tempus habile Baptismo; si de Solemnitate interest, de Gratia nihil refert. Tertull. de Baptismo, Cap. 19.*

(bb) *Ambros. de Myster. Pasch. Basil. Homil. Exhort. ad Baptism. Hieronym. in Epist. ad Pammach. contr. Error. Joan. Hierosolym. Leo, ad Episc. Sicul. Gregor. ad Tarsens. Burchard. lib. 4. Decret. cap. 6. & 7. Ivo, cap. 60. Gratian. de Consecrat. Distinct. 4. cap. de Catechum. Alcuin. de fest. Epiphaniæ. & de Vigil. Pasch. Raban. Maur. de Institut. Cleric. l. 2. c. 38. Various Canons of the Councils show moreover, that the Seasons for Baptism were long preserved — Non suscipi debere infantes ad Baptismum, nisi ante tres Septimanas Pasche. Concil. Lucens. 2. Can. 49. Baptismus extra Pascha nisi moribundis non conferatur. Concil. Autissiodorens. Can. 18. Omnes omnino à die quadragesimæ cum suis infantibus ad Ecclesiam observare præcipimus, ut sacro Baptismate regenerentur. Concil. Matiscon. 2. Can. 3. Uno tempore Paschæ celebrandum [Baptismum] esse annuntietur. Concil. Toletan. 2. Can. 4.*

Jerom, and *Leo*, and *Gregory*, among the former; from *Burchard*, and *Ivo*, and *Gratian*, and *Aluin*, and *Rabanus Maurus*, among the latter; that the Practice continued very long in the Church; till, as he Conjectures from a Passage in (bbb) *Socrates*, and *Rupertus Tuitiensis*, the great Increase of Christians, with some subsequent Neglects in attending these Solemn Administrations, gave the Occasion of its Discontinuance.

Yet it is observeable, that *this* Reason of its Desuetude did not prevail, till the 8th or 9th Century, which should make a Protestant ashamed of insisting on it. And a little Care and Discipline would easily enough prevent, or remove the suggested Inconvenience.

The Councils for divers Centuries endeavour'd (we are sure) to keep up this Solemn Custom; and even the (c) *Ordo Romanus* (however otherwise, corrupt and Novel) hath yet born Testimony against our modern Practice, and condemn'd it; as having made a proper Provision in the Case before us, that none presume to baptize, save only on the Eves of Easter and Whitsuntide; Danger of Death always excepted.

But whether the Corruptions of our present Age, and our utter Disuse of every thing which hath the Face of Discipline, will endure these, or any like Regulations, is, with all the Rest, entirely submitted to its proper Managers.

4. " That

(bbb) *Socrates, Histor. Eccles. Lib. 5. Cap. 19. Rupert. Tuitiens. Lib. 4. de Divin. Offic. Cap. 18.*

(c) *Nellus præsumat baptizare, nisi pro vigiliâ Paschæ & Pentecostes, nisi in periculo Mortis. Ord. Roman. In Ord. Quomodo agatur Concil. Provinciali, 4ta die,*

4. "That the *Key of Jurisdiction* be re-united to that of *Order*, and that both be lodged in the same Hand; as they formerly were, for above 1000 Years together after Christ."

I hope the Reader will be as far from *interpreting*, as I am from *meaning* this, in Derogation of any Advantages, belonging to the Practicers in our Ecclesiastical Courts; for whose *Profession* (in the general) and for whose *Persons* (many of them in particular) and for that excellent Learning, which none, in a Manner, but themselves now cultivate; I have ever entertained a very high Esteem.

The only Security they (at present) have for Obedience to their Injunctions, is confessed to be this *Key of Jurisdiction*; which, therefore, if taken out of their Hands, would leave them destitute of any Means, wherewith to preserve their own Authority; of which I am very far from desiring the least Diminution.

Now they never excommunicate, but upon Proof or Suggestion of the *Party's Contumacy*: So that if a judicial Declaration of the *Party's Contumacy*, should be attended with the same penal Consequences, wherewith their Sentence of Excommunication is *now* attended; They would have the same Provision, which they *now* have, for Obedience to their Orders and Injunctions. And *then*, what is, to *some*, a great Scandal, and, to many others, appears (at lowest) a great Irregularity, might be removed effectually; and (as hardly as some People's Mouths are stopped) I conceive we should hear no more of it.

But as this cannot be brought about, except the Legislature will interpose in it, thither it is, with all Humility, referred; where its favourable

ourable Reception cannot be doubted, if ever our Representatives in Convocation should think fit to crave it.

What was to this Purpose attempted, and well-nigh effected, in the last Session of Parliament, furnishes a just Ground of hoping, that when there shall be more Time and Leisure, there will be also sufficient Inclination, within those Walls, to *perfect what is wanting*, and to remove from amongst us whatever is obnoxious, or carries in the Face of it so much as the *Appearance of Evil*.

§. "That the *interceding mediatorial Office of the Priest*, be by some fit Methods inculcated upon the People, who by all means should acknowledge him in that Character and Capacity."

This I the rather mention, because the Notion seems to be quite sunk and lost; and all Esteem of his Office is made to center in his *personal Accomplishments*, and in his *preaching Abilities*.

Whereas the Holy Martyr (cc) *Ignatius*, magnifies the *publick Service of the Church*; and the *Constitutions* call the Bishops (of whose Office, in this Point, Priests or Presbyters have a Portion) (d) *the Voice of God; Mediators between God and his People*; and *Chrysostom* gives this as an Instance of the Usefulness of the publick Liturgy; that the *Prayers of the People were therein assisted by those of the Priests, and ascended to Heaven*

(cc) 'Εἰ δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ δόξῃ τοσούτῃ τοσαύτῃ ἰσχυρῶς ἔχει, πῶσω μάλλον ἢ τε τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ ἢ πᾶσις ἐκκλησίας; Ignat. in Epist. ad Ephes.

(d) See what is cited from the *Constitutions* and from *Chrysostom* in pag. 88. Notes (n) (o).

even with the better Success for going up in Conjunction with theirs.

(e) “ St. Clement (*Romanus*) compares the Part performed by the Priest in his Gospel Ministrations, to that which was performed by the Priest under the *Jewish Oeconomy*” ; who made (we know) therein *available Intercessions* for the Transgressions of that People.

This is indeed a very high and important Office ; which cannot in these Days, be too much magnified ; (ee) when so many Circumstances conspire to depress it ; when it is consigned to the Hands of our meanest Performers ; and is therefore considered and performed accordingly.

The Laity do generally, I fear, consider it, as a meer *Reading over a Form of Prayer*, which might as availably, and as well be done, by any Person in the Congregation, as by him who officiates. They seldom look upon the Man in the Desk as any other than a meer *Stipendiary*, not as an *authorized Intercessor to God, and to Christ for them.*

My Reverend Brethren will not, I hope, misconstrue me, if I press upon them a serious Endeavour to assert the Honour of their *mediatorial Office* between Christ and the Souls of their

(e) Τὸ δ' Ἀρχιερεὺς ἰδίᾳ καθήκοντι δεδομένου εἶσι, καὶ τοῖς ὑπεύουσι ἰδίᾳ ὁ τοιοῦτος δεσμεύεται, καὶ λεβήταις ἰδίου θύλακος ἐπὶ κεφαλῇ. Clement. in Epist. ad Corinth. where he pursues at large the Parallel between the Jewish and Christian Ministrations. Young's Edit. pag. 53.

(ee) The Reader may find this Part of the Priestly Function excellently proved and vindicated in *Two Treatises of the Christian Priesthood, and of the Dignity of the Episcopal Order*, Composed and published by the Reverend and very Learned Dr. HICKES—3d Edit. 1 Vol. p. 187, &c.

their People, by suffering none to act for them in this Part of their Function, but such as know how to sustain the Province with Decency and Authority ; and thence are likely to infuse into their People, a just Sense of the Honours due to it.

The Necessity of their own Appearance in the *Pulpit*, may plead, in some Cases, a pretty just Apology, for their Absence, at that time, from the *Dask*, and for their providing it with a proper Substitute. But it is high time to be careful in this Provision ; and that every Person, who can read the *Prayers*, should not thence be judged fit to offer them ; but such an one only as is sensible of the Honour, to which that Station entitles him ; and knows how to preserve, and to encrease the Esteem which is due to it.

The present State of the Clergy will furnish enough (if the Persons concerned will be diligent in seeking them) who are both *worthy of this Honour*, and *poor enough* to take up with such other Recompence as can be afforded them, for their Attendance at it.

But, Incumbents themselves (I do with all Submission crave leave to intimate) should not *Unnecessarily* absent from the *Personal Discharge* of this Honourable, this Important Service ; nor do any thing tending to nourish a Conceit in their People, that the *Oblation of their Prayers to God*, is any way beneath the most exalted Character.

In the primitive Church, there was indeed an Order of Men, whose Title was that of *Readers* ; but then the Word had a very different Signification from what it hath at present. They did indeed read the Scriptures (as now they do

in our Cathedral Churches) but did not read the Prayers. The Oblation of them to God, was the Chief Minister's Province; and continued to be so, for very many Ages.

So late, as in the (f) *Ordo Romanus*, we find an express Provision, that every Presbyter should keep a Clerk, or some Scholar-like Person, to read the Epistle or the Lesson for him.

Now if somewhat like this were observed in our Parochial Churches; if our Parish-Clerks (where capable) were appointed to this Office of reading the Scriptures; if in all future Provisions, the Capacity for Reading them Decently and Intelligibly, were insisted on; moreover, if Authority should think fit to restrain our Deacons from officiating in publick Prayer, at least in the Presence of a Presbyter; if it should add some Prayers to the Liturgy, wherein the Priest should professedly interceed for his People and bless them; if it should enjoin the Curate (ordinarily) to perform this Part in his own Person when he does not preach (or, however, upon all Week-day Festivals;) and if he should be then directed to officiate *Standing* (which in Worship hath always been considered as a Posture of Authority) except only when he recites the Litany, or when he makes Confession of his own, and his People's Sins; Perhaps (I say) with the Help of these, or some like, Provisions, the Esteem of this, much-neglected, Office, might a little be revived; and the People might be brought, by Degrees, to apprehend, that

(f) Omnis presbyter clericum habeat, vel scholarem, qui epistolam vel lectionem legat. In *Ord. Roman.* *Ord. Qualiter agatur Concilium Provinciale.*

that the Pulpit is not the only Station which is worthy of Honour.

6. " That a Chorepiscopus (or Suffragan)
 " be appointed in some Market-Town, or
 " Place of great Resort, within every rural
 " Deanary, to whom should appertain whatever
 " heretofore was committed to the *Penitentiary*,
 " in the District he should belong to, or in
 " the Villages adjacent to it; and that he
 " should accordingly be entrusted with the
 " Management of *Discipline* in all the Parts assigned him for his Province; yet with this
 " Restriction, that he should be subject and
 " accountable to the Bishop of his Diocese;
 " who, by his means might be acquainted
 " with the State of his People, much better,
 " and more fully, than it is possible he now
 " should be."

I am far enough from believing, with our Presbyterians, that the Bulk of our *present Dioceses* is any Argument against our *modern Episcopacy*; since it may be proved, that some of the *ancient Parishes* (as they were *then* called, though they had the same Signification with what we *now* call *Dioceses*) were equal in Extent and Compass, and in Number of People to our *present Bishopricks*. For at last, the Question will be, " Whether the primitive
 " Church was governed by a *Parity*, or *Imparity*
 " of Church Ministers, who severally presided
 " in their respective Places of publick Worship;
 " Whether the Succession to the Principal, or
 " Mother Church was not always reckoned by
 " some *one* Pastor, to whom the rest, during his
 " Life, owed a Subjection; and by whom
 " they were restrained and regulated in the
 " Exercise of their Ministerial Function."

If

If *this Question* be determined in favour of Episcopacy, and if some *one Church-Officer* did always preside over the rest in such a District; all other Questions will be besides the Point, nor will they affect to any Purpose the *grand Debate*. Now this, I think, is capable of as a clear Proof, as any one thing in all Antiquity.

Yet it must at last be acknowledged, that (*generally speaking*) the Bishops of the primitive Church, had a nearer Intercourse with their People in religious Offices, than our present Bishops can be supposed to have. The *Metropolis*, the *Mother Church*, or what we now call the *Cathedral*, had divers Offices appropriate to it, which might not regularly, nor ordinarily be performed elsewhere.

And here the Bishop himself presided, and acted in his own Person.

Originally indeed, the Bishop was the *first Church-Officer* of his District in Point of *Time*, as well as of *Honour*. (g) *St. Clement (Romanus)* in his 1st (undoubted) Epistle to the *Corinthians*, hath informed us; That “the Apostles, in their Travails, as they preached the Gospel, ordained the First Fruits of their Converts, Bishops and other Ministers; distinguishing their Qualifications by the Gift they had of discerning

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(g) Καὶ χάρις ἔν ᾧ πόλεις κυριώτερες [Ἀπόστολοι] κατέσταντο τὰς ἀρχὰς αὐτῶν, δοκιμασθέντες πρὸ πνεύματος εἰς ἐπισκοπὰς καὶ διακόνους τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ποιῆσαι. He goes on to compare this Settlement of the Apostles with *Moses's Settlement* of the *Levitical Priesthood* in the Line of *Aaron*. Καλέσονται τὲς περὶ ἐκκλησίας—ὅπως ἐὰν κοιμηθῶσιν, ἀλλήλων ἑτέρωθεν δεδοκιμασμένοι ἄνδρες ἢ λειτουργοὶ αὐτῶν. *Clement. Roman.* in 1. Epist. ad Corinth.

“ coming Spirits; and that they appointed
 “ them for the Service not only of *those* who did
 “ at *that* time believe; but of all likewise who
 “ should, in *After-times*, be Believers within such
 “ a District. He thence proceeds to shew,
 “ that these Bishops were proper Successors to
 “ the Apostles, &c.”

Now if in such a District (for Instance) as *Rome*, with its Dependencies, there was but *one* Bishop appointed, and if he was appointed to preside over all who should, in *After-times*, believe within that Compass; he must have been designed for a very *extensive* Province, and; certainly, for more than any *single Congregation*. And I appeal to any Man, who is at all versed in primitive Records, whether he hath ever heard of more than *one* Bishop at *one* time, in *Rome*; except perhaps whilst the Dispute was warm between the *Jewish* and *Gentile* Converts; who had each of them (as some say) their distinct Bishop. If they had so, it was a Case peculiar; and they considered themselves as two distinct Ecclesiastical Societies; each of which was however united under *one* single Head, who was the Bishop. Neither of these had above *one* at *once*; from whom they reckoned the Succession to their respective Churches.

The Course then was, that as the Converts of the Bishop multiplied, who was thus appointed by the Apostles to gather a Church, and to preside over it, Presbyters were ordained to be his Assistants; and these, whilst one Place of Assembly would contain his whole Number, did either serve in it under him, or supplied his Absence. But when his Converts grew

grew too numerous for a single Congregation (which in very many Sees must have been within the first Century, and whilst some of the Apostles yet were living) the Bishop *then* delegated some of these his Presbyters, to serve their Spiritual Occasions in distinct Assemblies for Worship; though still with such a Dependence upon the Mother Church, that Baptism, with divers other Offices, was not regularly performed out of it. This Delegation was at first occasional; and the whole Superintendency was still his own. But as the Number of his Converts was further increased, the Bishop found himself obliged to enlarge the Power of these his Substitutes; nor was it long before they had a fixed Relation to a determinate Proportion of his Parish, or Diocese. Since Pope *Evaristus* is said to have divided the City of *Rome* into a certain Number of *Titles* (what we now call *Parishes*) very early in the second Century; and within three or four Years from the Death of St. *John*.

The Bishop however was still all along considered, as the chief Ecclesiastical Officer, who had always his Negative in Matters of Moment, and without whom, divers Acts of these Presbyters were censured as Irregular.

Our Accounts of the Worship, Discipline and Regimen, of the primitive Church, are taken, for the Main, from what was done in the *Cathedral*, or *Mother Church*, where the Bishop himself officiated; nor have we indeed any Thing of Moment transmitted to us, but what was *there* transacted.

What passed in *Parochial Churches* (according to the *modern* Signification of the Words) is very little known to us; only we have Reason to believe, that the *Presbyter*, detached from the *Bishop* to serve the Occasions of those *less Assemblies*, did not depart from the Usages of the Church he was sent from, except in in such Circumstances, as the Littleness of the Place, and the Want of more Church-Officers rendered necessary.

What hath led our Contenders for the *Presbyterian* Model into their Error, may perhaps have been, their Want of attending to this Distinction.

The Accounts we have of the ancient Worship, do make indeed the Bishop *chief Agent* in all Church-Offices; from whence they conclude him to have been little, if any thing more, than a *Parish-Priest*. They do not mean-while consider him, as sitting in his Episcopal Throne, and there surrounded with *Presbyters*, who were all at his Command, to be sent occasionally to, or statedly fixed in, any of his *Suburbicary Districts*, to which he should assign them.

And though we have little or no Account of the Worship, which *there* was celebrated; yet we have plain Evidences, that *such Places* there were (and Worship in them) distinct from *that*, in which the *Bishop* himself officiated, and entirely subject to his Directions. This is Proof enough of an *Imparity* in those, who yet *presided* in the respective Places of *publick Worship*; and will lay a just Foundation of the present (obtaining) Distinction between the *Cathedral* and *Parochial* Service.

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It must however (I have said) be acknowledged, that the Bishops of the *primitive Church* had generally a nearer Relation, than *now* they have, to the People under their Care; and had more practicable Means of keeping up with them an Intercourse and Correspondence.

Now *Suffragans* would go a great way towards a Redress of the Grievance, which arises from this Article; each of our present *Bishops* would then be a sort of *Archbishop*; and our two *Archbishops* would then be *Patriarchs*.

If every Place of great Resort had one of these *Suffragans*, the whole Regimen of *Penance* might be commodiously fixed in *him*, and it might be sufficient to have his Church, the *only one* within his *District*, where *Stations* should be distinguished, and this *Discipline* be exercised.

The large Extent of our *Dioceses* could no longer be then complained of; nor the Incapacity, which the Bishop thence lies under, of acquainting himself much, either with his Clergy or his People.

Since therefore our *late Parliament*, of glorious Memory, hath so well contributed to the Removal of that other Complaint, against the immoderate Extent of our larger *Parishes*, and the disproportionate Numbers of the People under a *single Cure*; the Emulation of a *succeeding Parliament* might be very fitly employed, upon a Redress of this Grievance also, and upon bringing both *Parishes* and *Dioceses* within a *more manageable Compass*.

There is indeed already a Law (gg) which, I have not yet heard, hath ever been repealed, appointing Suffragans to be constituted in such Places, as are therein specified; and moreover empowering the Bishop of every Diocese, to nominate two Spiritual Persons to the King's Highness, for his Choice and Confirmation of one of them to be Suffragan to the said Bishop, and to have such Power and Jurisdiction, as should be specified in the Commission granted to him by his Bishop. And the King was to present the Person so nominated and confirmed, to the Archbishop for his Consecration."

How the Exercise of these Powers hath been dropt or neglected, is a Point which I have no Authority to examine; nor does it appear to me, what Maintenance such a Church-Officer could have, upon the Foot of our present Establishment.

But even if *that* Point could be adjusted, and if our Bishops should fix upon Persons in their respective Dioceses, who should in all Circumstances be qualified for sustaining and adorning this Province; I know not what Questions of *Law* might be started, upon the Execution of their Office, which is so little known to us. And therefore to clear up this matter, and to settle it upon a sure Foundation, the Help of the Legislature seems fit to be requested, and would, I doubt not, be granted upon a proper Application.

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(gg) 26 Hen. 8. c. 14.

The Market-Towns, which are here pronounced for the Sees of these Suffragans, are usually, we observe, least and worst provided with a sufficient Maintenance for their Parochial Minister; the Want of this is known to sink his Character and Credit amongst them, to a Degree, which renders them the most obnoxious to a Misguidance from false Teachers; it is therefore humbly hoped, that the Appointment of such an Officer, either to act in Concurrence with the Minister, or to supply the Cure in his own Person (if a Provision were made for him) might strengthen the Hands of our established Church, and procure a Reverence to her Authority, which hath hitherto been paid her in very scanty Measures.

The Reader, it is presumed, will observe, that I desire no Increase of *secular* Power to the Church; nor any Enforcement of her Censures from the Civil Magistrate. No! let her Censures, as they are in their Nature purely Spiritual, continue so in their Use, whenever they are applied to purely Spiritual Occasions. And let those who *despise*, go on to do so, till God in his Mercy, shall awaken in them a Sence of those terrible Words: *He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* Luk. x. 16.

Yet thus much may seem not improper from a Christian Magistrate, to enforce what the (b) Council of *Ilerdo* in the 6th Century had appointed, viz. that if any Person should neglect to quit the Church, after the Priest had ordered him to do so, for any Crime he had been guilty of, his Restoration should be the longer in obtaining.

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(b) See it cited in pag. 167. Note (a).

It might not, I say, be improper from a Christian Magistrate, that he should oblige his Subjects to comply with such Orders, or submit to such Censures, as in a Matter purely *Spiritual* should be enjoined them by their *Spiritual Guide*.

(i) Charles the Great accounted this a very fit and becoming Part for himself to appear in; and accordingly he enforced the *Ecclesiastical Authority* with his *Imperial Law*.

7. And lastly; "That all this (or whatever else of this kind shall be provided) be more particularly specified in a *Penitential Office*, explained by a proper *Rubrick*, and added to our publick Liturgy."

These Things I have presumed to offer; but with great Submission, as becomes a *private* Person; who, though I have employed some of my few vacant Hours, in Thought and Study, for the Welfare of that sacred Community, in which (however unworthy) I have the Honour to bear Office; yet will, in no Respect, take upon me to *dictate*, esteeming my my self sufficiently Happy, if I may be allowed to *suggest* what others, who have more Authority, Leisure, and Ability, shall *improve* and *make effectual*.

But if any Part of what hath here been offered, shall be judged Inconvenient; or if any thing more serviceable shall be elsewhere propounded, I am ready with all Chearfulness to *depart* from the *one*, and to *embrace* the *other*.

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(i) See him cited in pag. 169. Note (i) and (k).

The CONCLUSION.

Mean while, what hath here been attempted in the preceding Essay, should shock the Mind of no sober *Layman*, who hath really at Heart the Honour of Religion, and the Reverence due to its Holy Founder.

What hath been *represented* in the foregoing Papers, was the undoubted *Practice* of the Church, in her *earliest* and *purest* Ages. And though the Licence and Corruption, with the Ignorance and Superstition, which the Confusions of the Empire brought into the Church, did in *succeeding Generations*, soil her Face, and break into the Simplicity of her *ancient Manners*; yet did 1000 Years pass over her, before her *Discipline* was reduced to that low Ebb of Authority and Influence, which *now* it stands at.

The *Private Management* made the first Breach upon the *Publick*, and hath ever since continued to supplant and weaken it. Then came on *Redemptions* and *Commutations*; and thus, when *Discipline* grew by these Steps to be a *meer Form*, and to serve so faintly the Purposes of *true Repentance*, it was judged not very material, whose Hands it was lodged in, nor what *Words* were used in the Application of it.

At the same Time, and by the very same Degrees, wherein the *Efficacy* and *Power* of it *declined*, the *Forms* and *Shows* of it *increased* and *multiplied*. And, as if there had been a Design to *recompense* it with *Compliment*, for what it *lost in Reality*, the *Character* of what remained to it, was highly magnified and called *Sacrament*.

I have

I have been often forced to use the Word *Penance*, in the preceding Discourse. And though it might seem to argue some Suspicion of my Reader's Understanding, should I labour an Apology for such an *harmless* Term; yet, because this Tract may fall into various Hands; and some may (perhaps) be offended with a Name, which they suspect of *Popery*; I must intreat them to interpret it as I do; and then it will mean no more, than that *outward Discipline* of *Repentance*, which I know no single Word besides, to be capable of expressing.

The *Ancients* often confounded this with the *Internal Duty*; expressing both the one and the other by the same Word; as well enough knowing, that the Usage of the Times they lived in, would be sufficient to secure *them* from all Misconstruction. But *my* Case had been different, should I have used all along the Term *Repentance*; which having been generally applied *amongst us*, to signify only the *Internal Duty*, would scarce have been understood, in any Case, to mean the *External Discipline*.

Popery is a Word, whose *Meaning* I labour with a Zeal, which I hope, is as true, and as well-informed as theirs can be, who are loudest in their Outcries against it. But I am not altogether so suspicious of every thing, which hath at any time suffered under that Imputation. Because I have observed many excellent Things, many Wise and Learned, and Judicious Persons, and as true Friends to the Reformation, as any of those who most frequently talk of it, which yet have (severally) been aspersed with that invidious Character.

What

What hath been *here propounded*, reaches I confess, not quite far back enough into the Purity of the *ancient Church*. But the *Discipline* which hath *here been represented*, was in Use and Practice from the very Fountain. And if I have not recommended the Revival of it, as it stood in the three first Centuries, it was, because I was apprehensive, that the Fervours of our Zeal were too *cold* for any such *Austerities*.

Those who will be most forward to object, will, I fear, object against it as too *rigorous*, though no more should be asked of them, than to come up with the Standard of the 7th or 8th Century. And indeed there *has been* no more asked of them : For so late as the Age of *Charles the Great*, which was still later than the 8th, and advanced into the 9th Century ; (k) we read of *publick Penance assigned to publick Crimes* ; and that *all Counts, Judges, &c. as well as the rest of the People, should conform to the Bishop's Directions*.

In Cases of *Private Sin*, which were only revealed to the Priest in *secret Confession*, the (l) *Course*

(k) See what is cited in pag. 169. Note (k). And again, Qui publicè peccat, publicè mulctetur pœnitentiâ, & secundum ordinem pro merito suo excommunicetur & reconcilietur. In 1 Concil. Cabilon. Can. 25. Habit. A. D. 813. And again, Quorum autem peccata in publico sunt, in publico debet esse pœnitentia, per tempora quæ Episcopi arbitrio pœnitentibus, secundum differentiam peccatorum, dèternuntur ; eorumq; reconciliatio in publico esse debet ab Episcopo, sive à Presbyteris, jussu tamen Episcoporum ; sicut Canones Africani Concilii testantur ; ubi scriptum est ; Cujuscunq; autem pœnitentis publicum & vulgatissimum crimen est, ante Absidam manus ei imponatur. Raban. Maur. de Institut. Cleric. lib. 2. c. 30.

(l) See what is cited in pag. 165. Note (w).

Course at that Time was, to assign to the Party in *secret* Penitential Mortifications, and so in *secret* to *Restore* or *Absolve* him. But in Cases of *publick* and *notorious* Guilt, the Church even *then* was not so contented; nor would she receive the Party to Communion, without an *Humiliation* as *Publick* as his *Crime*.

This, *this*, is the Point, which I most insist on, as necessary to the Honour of the Church, required by the Institution of her Founder, for the Benefit of Souls, and as such an *essential Part* of her *Discipline*, which, till it be restored with Efficacy and Vigour, will, I fear, withhold many Blessings of God from us.

Whoever is at all acquainted with the History of the Church, must know the Truth of what is here suggested. Those who are *not* so, may wonder perhaps to hear, or to read, what they have not been accustomed to think of; and it may be, will as much be shocked with it, as People of tender Constitutions are apt to be, when surprized with meeting any uncommon Object. But this Wonder will be much abated, when they shall suffer themselves to be informed and convinced, that the *Discipline* which is our present Subject, had a *Being*, as soon as our Religion had any Number of *Professors*; that it was *formed* in the *Infancy* of the *Christian Church*, *grew up* together with it, and that the *Vigour* of the *one* declined with the *Purity* of the *other*.

And when they shall observe, moreover, that the Revival of this in the full Efficacy[?] of its *ancient Use* (though much *desired* indeed, yet) is not here *propounded*; they will rather (it is hoped) acquiesce in the *Modesty* of such a *tender Wish*,
than

than charge it with *unseasonable Rigour*, or with any *undue Pretence* to an *Increase of Power*.

The Libertine indeed is interested against us, and from him we have Reason to apprehend the fiercest Opposition; for should this *Discipline* recover any Part of the Ground it hath lost, he is most likely to fall first into its Hands, and to feel it exerting it self in its utmost Rigours. But were it not infinitely better, that he should feel it *here* for his Advantage and Reformation, than that he should feel *worse* hereafter from the *Wrath of God*, which is revealed from Heaven against all *Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men*? He would be content ('tis likely) to wait till that *Wrath* overtakes him; and to *walk*, mean while, *in the ways of his Heart, and in the sight of his Eyes*. But as he is a Member of the Church of Christ, he is under her Care, and his *Soul will be required at her Hands*. There is no way for her to discharge her self of him with safety, but *first*, to warn him of his Danger; and (if *that* be not effectual) *next* to turn him out of her *Fold*. And then as an Heathen, she hath no more to do with him, except he will submit, and beg a Reconciliation.

To all this, the Scornor, I expect, should reply with Mockery, which is his usual Weapon, and serves him in his *offensive*, as well as in his *defensive* Occasions: He fears the least Revival of this *ancient Apostolick Practice*, because his bold and daily Insults upon the most sacred Truths, would receive from it a *due Correction* instead of a *serious Answer*.

But

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But I trust the World is not yet so far gone in Mirth, as to be laughed out of a thing so important as *Religion*; and what is plainly an *Institution* of the *best Religion*, which hath ever yet appeared for the Benefit of Mankind. For,

If it was the *Practice* of the *Apostles*, we may be sure it was the *Design* of *Christ*; and if it was the *Practice* of those *Ages*, which next succeeded that of the *Apostles*, we may be sure it was not intended to *expire with them*; but was designed (on the contrary) to be a *standing Ordinance* in the Christian Church.

Now these are Considerations, which, it may well be hoped, shall be enabled to maintain their Ground, against any Levities of Wit, any Scurrilities of Profaneness, any Attacks of Vice, or any other of those foolish *Bolts*, which the Ignorant, the Petulant, the Libertine, or the Scornor, shall severally, or jointly, think fit to *shoot* at them.

I have neither Leisure nor Inclination, to reply to any such Objectors, should they appear against me.

I have not willingly *misrepresented* any Thing; but as I am very conscious to my self of my own Weakness, and as I have composed this Tract in various and distracted Portions of Time, such as a very busy Life would allow me, I may easily have fallen into some Errors, though none (I hope) affecting my main Design.

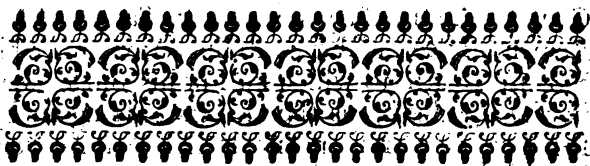
Therefore

The CONCLUSION. 255

Therefore if any one shall propound a *serious* *Objection* in a *becoming Manner*, he shall either receive from me an *ingenuous Retraction*, or a *serious and becoming Answer*.

May the God of Truth and Order, dispose us all to embrace the one, and as soon as may be, to form our selves into the other.

T H E E N D .



T H E
A P P E N D I X .

N U M B. I.

Gregory Nyssen's *Canonical Epistle to*
Letoius, Bishop of Melitine.

Translated from the GREEK.



NE Thing there is of great Moment, towards a due Observance of the Holy Festival, (*viz.* of *Easter*) which is a right Knowledge of the Discipline, where- with Offenders are to be treated, according to the Laws and Canons of the Church, that so every Disorder and Distemper of the Soul, arising from Sin, may find a Cure.

A a

For

For since this is through all the Churches of God, an Anniversary Solemnity; Sacred to the Remembrance of Christ's Resurrection, after his Fall by Death (to which Fall of his, Sin answers in the Analogy, as the Sinners Rise again by Repance, is correspondent to his Resurrection) it will be very suitable to the Nature of this Festival Occasion, that we should not only bring those to God, who by the Grace of Baptism are *renewed in the Spirit of their Minds*; but that those also should be *Begotten again unto a Lively Hope*, who have indeed forfeited it by their Sin, but are now desirous to retrieve it by their Repentance, and by their *Conversion from dead Works*, and to walk once more in the Paths of Life.

For it is indeed, no very easy matter, nor of small Importance, to give just and pertinent Directions upon this Occasion, *to guide one's words* here (as the *Psalmist* hath it, *Psal. 112. 5.*) *with Discretion*; that so, as the same Holy Author expresses himself; *the Righteous may never be moved, but may be had in Everlasting Remembrance.*

As therefore in Medicine for the Body, the one great *End* of it, is the Patient's Cure, tho' the *Means* to that *End* be various (since as Distempers differ, a different Regimen will be proper for each) so likewise it is in Distempers of the *Mind*, which, being as different from each other, as those of the Body, will require as different Methods of Treatment and of Cure; with as various an Application of those Methods, as the *Diagnostick Symptom* shall happen to direct and indicate. That we may then proceed with some Method, in handling this Question, what we have to offer upon it, shall be ranged in the following Order.

There

There are, (we know) according to the old Distinction, Three Faculties in the Soul, of Principal Account; the *Rational*, the *Concupiscible*, and the *Irascible*: In the use of which, is exemplified, either the Rectitude of those, who live up to the Rules of Virtue, or the Frailty of those, who depart from them, into Vice.

Now he, who proposes applying a suitable Medicine to the Distemper'd Part of the Soul, ought well to consider, in which of the Faculties here recited, that Distemper is lodg'd; and then to apply his Method of Cure accordingly; least for want of due Discernment in this matter, he should mistake in his Application, and attempt to Cure a Part which is not affected. As we see in some unskilful Physicians, who, misjudging the Symptom, prescribe what inflames the Malady of their Patients. For Instance, if the Disease proceeds from an Over-measure of Heat, and if, because they who suffer from a cold Constitution, find Relief from warm Medicines; therefore they, who abound in Heat, shall be treated with the same warm Regimen; the Consequence will certainly be, that the Distemper will become hence exceedingly Dangerous, and perhaps may prove Incurable.

As therefore Physicians should be well acquainted with the Temperament of their Patient's Body, whether Hot or Cold, Moist or Dry, be most prevailing in it, that they may be able to treat it in a proper manner; so should we, resorting to the aforementioned Distinction, between the Three Principal Faculties of the Soul, make *that* the General Ground and *Basis* of our Cure, and of the Methods we are to proceed by, in order to it.

Having then consider'd the Faculties of the Soul, under this Threefold Division of the *Rational*, the *Concupiscible*, and the *Irascible*; the due Order and Temperament of the *Rational*, will require just and awful Sentiments of God, a due Knowledge of Good and Evil, and a well-poised Judgment of the Things about us; which of them should be chosen, and which avoided and rejected. And again, here will fall under Consideration, whatever Fault or Guilt may be contracted, by Impiety towards God, or by a wrong Estimate made of the Things about us; as when we put *Darkness for Light, or Light for Darkness*.

The *Concupiscible* is then as it should be, when the *Desire* is directed to an Object truly Good, and deserving of it; and (if there be any aptness in our Nature to Love) when we are fully perswaded, that nothing is so fit an Object for that Passion to fix on, as *Virtue*, together with that Glorious Fountain, from whence all which is Good and Excellent, flows down upon us.

The Degeneracy, to which we are, in this Part liable, and which tends to Sin, is, when a Man misplaces his Desire upon vain Glory and empty Applauses, or upon the fading Flower of external Beauty; from whence proceed Avarice, Ambition, Luxury, Lust, with all that numerous Train of Vices, which are so usually appendant to this Species of Evil.

Again, The *Irascible* is then rightly dispos'd, when it inclines us to an Hatred of Evil, and to wage War with all the irregular Motions of the Soul; when it fortifies the Mind against all those Impressions which are so apt to disturb and terrify

Numb. I The APPENDIX.

rify the greatest part of us; when it enables us to resist even unto Blood the Allurements of Sin, and to condemn the Apprehension of Torments, and even of Death it self: In a word, when by disuniting us from the Pleasures of Life, and whatever either Appetite, or Custom, or Prejudicate Opinion, hath rendred familiar and agreeable, it proves us Superior to them all, and gains for us the Mastery, in contending earnestly for Faith, and a good Conscience.

The Vices to which this Part of our Nature prompts us, are evident and manifest; such as Envy, Hatred, Anger, Railing, Strife, Contentious, and Revengeful Dispositions, which long retain, and desperately return an Injury in Blood and Slaughter. For Undisciplin'd Reason, not Instructing us how to use the Weapon wherewith, Providence hath furnisht us, turns the Edge of it upon our selves; and so that which was given us for our Advantage and Defence, we preposterously abuse to our own Destruction.

To proceed then upon the Foot of these Three Divisions. The Sins which affect the Rational Part of the Soul, have been all along censur'd by the Fathers of the Church, as Sins of a deeper Dye, and as such demanding a fuller and more laborious Penance than any other. For Instance, if any one should deny his Faith in Christ, or revolt to *Judaism, Idolatry, Manicheism*, or any such like Species of Impiety; if, moreover, his Apostacy were unforc'd, and if he should repent afterwards, and see his Error, such an one, (according to Ancient Usage,) would stand Condemned to Penance for his whole Life. For he would never be allowed

to join in Communion with the (a) Faithful, but would be obliged to put up his Prayers apart from them; and as to any Participation of the Sacred

(a) Here it may not be amiss to suggest to the Reader, the Ancient manner of Publick, Solemn Worship; which began with the Lector's reading diverse Portions of the Old Testament; then followed *Psalmody*; next succeeded other Portions of the New Testament: After that, Exhortations from one or more Presbyters, and last of all from the Bishop. Then came on the Holy Liturgy; *First*, For the *Catechumens*; of whom there seem to have been diverse Ranks and Orders; the most *Imperfect* went out at the first Proclamation of the Deacon, *προελαβετε οὐ καυχούμενοι*. Then came on the Prayer for such as were to be exorcized, *ὡς ἔστι ἐνεργούμενων*; these seem to have been another Rank of *Catechumens*; and when they were in the same manner dismissed, the *Competents*, or such as were just ready for Baptism, were next prayed for; and when that Part too was finish'd, the Deacon sent them out, and then exhorted the Penitents to pray for themselves, and the Congregation likewise to interceed for them. A Formulary of this last Prayer, I have given a Place to in this *Appendix*, Numb. 4. The Penitents then were dismiss'd with Imposition of Hands from the Bishop; and afterwards the *Faithful* advanced to the *μυσικὴ εὐχή*, to the Offertory, to the General Prayer of Intercession and Thanksgiving, (which were preceded severally by a Bidding Prayer from the Deacon) and so to the great Sacrifice. This Solemn Office was perform'd by the Bishop: It was call'd *μυσικὴ*, in regard none but the *Mystæ*, i. e. such as were initiated, and retained their Privilege, might assist at it. No Stranger might, except he brought Recommendatory Letters from the Bishop of the Place he belong'd to. *N. B.* The Bishop first Bless'd the People, and gave the *Peace* to them, before he proceeded to the great Sacrifice. The Deacons assisted at the Oblation of the Eucharistical Elements, and the *Ostiary* for the People distributed into their proper Seats, the Men on one side, and the Women on the other. And when the whole Congregation had *Receiv'd*, another Bidding Prayer was added by the Deacon; and *offer'd* by the Bishop, with Thanksgiving; after which, the Deacon dismiss'd the Congregation with an *Ite in Pace*, *Go in Peace*. See *Apost. Constit. lib. 2. cap. 57.* and *lib. 8. from cap. 6. to 13. Justin Martyr, 2. Apolog. Concil. Laodic. Can. 19.* And in this *Appendix*, Numb. 4. Note (u.)

Sacred Elements, he would be quite debarred from it; only in extream Danger of Death, he would be permitted to Communicate. And if he should recover beyond all expectation, he must return to the same *Solitary* State he was in before his Sickness; since it would never be permitted to him, to partake of the Holy Mysteries, till the very Article of his *Exit*.

But for such as have been forc'd into Compliance against their Wills, by Pain and Torture, they have only a set Time of Penance assign'd them; for so the Holy Fathers have thought fit to mitigate their Sentence; in regard it was not so much apprehended, that their Wills, or their Souls were faulty, as that the meer Frailties of their Flesh were unable to abide the Trial. And therefore all Transgressions of this kind, have the same measure of Penance assign'd them, which are allotted to simple Fornication.

For those who have resorted to Wizards and Conjurers, or to such as undertake the doing great Feats for them, by the help of *Demons*, they are to be strictly examin'd, whether they were driven upon that Sin, by any extream or heavy Pressure, which lay hard upon them, or whether from an utter neglect of the Cautions deliver'd to them in Holy Writ, they have wantonly and willfully resorted to the Fellowship of *Demons*. For if they did it through meer Instability of Faith, and from a rejecting of that God, who is the *One* great Object of Christian Worship, their Sentence then should be the same with that of downright Apostacy. But if any insupportable Extremity or Pressure, should appear to have led them into this Transgression, and to have overborn with its Weight,

the Frailties of their Courage; they should then be treated with the same Compassion as those are, who are overcome by Torments, when they ought to make a Courageous Profession of their Faith.

Now, as to the Sins which spring from the Head of *Concupiscence*, or Desire, they are branch'd out into these Two Divisions; one call'd *Adultery*, the other *Fornication*. Some indeed, who have been a little more exact and nice in this matter, have ranged the Sin of *Fornication*, in the same Class and Order with that of *Adultery*; inasmuch as there is only one Lawful Conjunction of Man and Woman; whatever therefore is not *according to Law*, is *against it*; and he who possesses what is not his own, possesses what is another's, altho' the proper Owner should put in no Claim to it. Besides, that God hath appointed but One *Help-Meet* for Man; and for Woman, One only Head. And the Scriptures have apparently recommended and allowed to every Man, that he should *possess his own* (and only his own) Vessel. Therefore I say, such as have weigh'd this matter somewhat more exactly, have judg'd the Sin of *Fornication*, to be very little different from that of *Adultery*; especially since the Scriptures warn us, not to use the Company of a strange Woman.

But as the Fathers of the Church have thought fit to deal tenderly with the Weaknesses of Human Nature; the Sin hath been rang'd in this General Division: (1.) *Fornication*, which is an Indulgence to *Concupiscence*, without Injury or Damage to a Third Person; And, (2.) *Adultery*, which implies moreover, a Mischief contrived and acted to another's Detriment. As to all the Sins of *Concupiscence* against Nature, they fall within this latter Class, as being Injurious to Nature,

Nature, which in this Case, stands for the Third Person Injured.

This, therefore, being the *General Division* of Sins, which come under the *General Head* of *Concupiscence*, the *General Remedy* for the Disorders thence arising, is, to cleanse and purify the Man from them by *Penance*.

But since (as it hath been suggested) in the Sin of *Simple Fornication*, there is implied no Injury to a Third Person; therefore the Time of *Penance* for *Adultery*, and for the Sins against Nature, is double to that which is imposed for *Fornication*; because in the one, there is implied an Injury to a Third Person, which is not in the other.

There is, moreover, a further Distinction to be made in the *Penance* of those, who are led into Sin by the Allurements of Pleasure. Since he, who of his own accord, (*b*) advances to the Discovery of his Sins, as by his voluntary Accusation of himself, in matters which could no other way have been prov'd against him, he gives a Specimen of the Change there is in his Mind, towards that which is Good, and seems inclinable to seek Relief from proper Medicines; so in these various Respects, (he will) deserve the lighter Correction. On the other hand, he, who is either caught in the Fact, or upon Suspicion, or Charge against him, found Guilty against his Will, must expect that the Time of his *Penance* should be prolong'd to him; that so, after a perfect Purgation, he may be at length admitted to partake of the Holy Mysteries.

The

(*b*) Confession to the Priest in Private, (it hence appears) was at this Time in use, and stands here commended; and we may observe moreover, its reference to Publick Discipline.

The Canons of the Church have therefore directed, that such as have offended in the Article of *Fornication*, should be utterly expell'd from the Publick Service of the Church, for the full space of Three Years; and afterwards stand for the same space of Time in the *Station of Hearers*; and that for the further space of Three Years, they should be admitted to *Pray* in the *Station of the Prostrate*; and thence be receiv'd into full Communion.

(c) But if any shall demonstrate, by the Diligence and Punctuality of their Submission to the Discipline impos'd on them, that they are returned to a due Sense of their Duty sooner, it shall be Lawful for the Officer entrusted with the Administration of this Discipline, as he judges it expedient, for the Service of the Church, to contract the Time, wherein the Penitent is appointed to stand in the *Station of Hearers*, (for Instance) and so to admit him somewhat sooner to that of the *Prostrate*; and again, to contract the Time of his *Prostration* also, and admit him somewhat sooner to full Communion, accordingly as he shall judge, (for to this Officer it is left to judge) of the Constitution and Disposition of the Party, whom he puts under this *Medicinal Regimen*. For as it is on one hand forbidden, to *cast Pearls before Swine*, so 'tis on the other, alike unlawful to deprive those of *them*, who approve themselves *clear and perfect Men*, by having *cleansed themselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*.

As to the Sins of *Adultery*, and the rest which have been mentioned, they are to be Cured in the

(c) See pag. 176, Note (t) of the preceeding Tract.

the same way with that of *Fornication*; only the Time is to be double to that of the other. But here likewise, as in the Case of *Fornication*, the Disposition and Temper of the Party are to enter into the Account, and accordingly as *they* shall indicate, he may be sooner or later admitted to partake of the Holy Elements. (d)

There still remains to be consider'd, the *Inrascible* Part of the Soul, when it falls into Sin, by a departue from the just use of the Passion of Anger.

Now since there are many and various Instances of Sins, which take their Rise from this Fountain of Corruption; for the rest, it hath seemed good to the Fathers of the Church, not to be very exact nor rigid, nor to lay out very much of their Thoughts or Pains upon them; (altho' indeed, the Scriptures have not only forbidden to Kill, but likewise to vent opprobrious Language, or indeed any thing else, which Anger would suggest to us) but the only Sin, in this kind, against which they have guarded, by Solemn Denunciations of Censure, is that of *Killing*. And this stands divided into *Wilful* and *Involuntary*: The *Wilful* is judg'd to be that in the first Place, for which a Man makes Preparation before-hand, and contrives before he acts it; and again, that is, in the next Place adjudged to be (e) *Willful* likewise, which a Man commits in the Heat

(d) ὁ ἀγαθός. The Good; by way of Eminence called so; as it is call'd at other times, τὸ τελεῖον, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν, The Perfect and Good. By which is meant the Holy Eucharist; the Perfection and Consummation of the Christian Worship.

(e) There was then no allowance made to the modern Distinction between Murder, and Manslaughter upon Duels and Rencontres; Passion was either to be subdued, or the Effects of it were to be punish'd, as wilful Mischiefs.

Heat of a Scuffle, by wounding his Neighbour mortally. For he, who suffers himself to be overborn by his Passion, and is eager to indulge his Appetite of Révenge, will admit of no healing Considerations, of nothing which may prevent the Mischief, during the continuance of his Rage. And therefore the Death which ensues upon a sudden Fray, is very justly censur'd as an Act of the *Will*, and not as the Effect of meer Casualty or Misfortune.

For *Involuntary* Cases; They are easily distinguish'd (*E. G.*) when a Man apparently intending another matter, does a fatal Mischief, through meer Misfortune.

They then who would atone for a wilful Breach of the Sixth Commandment, should be reminded, that to *sub* the Time of Penance, must be *trebled*, no less than Twenty Seven Years (Nine in each Stage of Penance) being appointed for them, so that for Nine Years, they are to continue in a State of (*f*) *Absolute and Perfect* *Segregation* *Resignation* (all Entrance within the Church being entirely forbidden them) for other Nine Years they are to continue in the *Station* of (*g*) *Hearers*,

[*(f)* παν ἑλὲ ἀφορισμῶ.] This must refer to the Station of Weeping; in which, the Penitent, standing at the Door, or Porch, (*Atrium*) of the Church, without daring to come into it, implored the Prayers of those who entred, and desired their Intercession for a nearer Access. The Station next this, was that of *Hearers*.

[*(g)* μὲν τῆς διδασκαλίας, καὶ τῆς γοητῶν ἀποστάσεως, καὶ τῆς μετὰ τὸ λαὸν συστάσεως ἀξιωματικῆς.] Hence it should seem, that in the Time and Place, wherein this Father wrote, the Station of *Consistentia*, after that of *Prostration*, was not in use. And indeed, diverse Passages of this Epistle show, that immediately after Penitents had pass'd thro' the Stage of *Prostration*, they were (forthwith) admitted, as it follows here (*εἰς τὴν μετὰ τὸν λαὸν ἀγίασμα*) to the Participation of the

Hearers, only to stand *hearing* with the rest of the People, whilst the Scriptures are read and expounded; and in the Third, and last Novennial space, they are to offer up such Prayers as are proper for, and allowed to the *Prostrate*; and thus at last, are to proceed to the Participation of the Holy Eucharist.

But then, *here* likewise, as in the former Cases, the Officer, who executes this Church-power, should have a due Regard to the Behaviour of the Person under Censure, so as to shorten the Time of it, as he shall judge to be expedient; and thus instead of Nine Years under each Stage, to assign him Eight, Seven or Five, accordingly as he shall observe the Degree of his Penitence and Compunction to compensate for the Time in which he should have lain under it; or to exceed the Measures of their Diligence, who in a longer time make less riddance of the Work allotted to them.

But now, as to *Involuntary Homicide*, tho' it hath ever indeed been thought to deserve *Pardon*, yet hath it always been judg'd very far from meriting *Commendation*. This I have therefore suggested, because Canonical Discipline, hath thought fit to degrade from the (b) *Sacerdotal*

the Holy Mystery. However, it is plain, from what hath been cited in the foregoing Tract, out of his Brother *Basil's* Canonical Epistle, that this Affair was in different Places, differently order'd; and that *Basil* was well acquainted with the *Station of Confessionia*. See pag. 71, and 72, of this Treatise, Notes (n.) and (o.)

(b) *ἡ ἀποκρίσις τοῦ ἱερέως*.] I think I am right in Translating. This the *Sacerdotal Order*; what in the Laity was punish'd with *Segregation*, being punish'd in the Clergy, with *Degradation* from their Order; which in those Days was esteem'd equivalent to the other. And it was a Maxim then,

(c) *ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ μὴ ἔχων τὴν ἀποκρίσιν*

as

tal Order, even those, who have been but *Casual* engaged in Blood, as Persons Unclean and Polluted.

The Time then assign'd for expiating the Sin of *simple Fornication*, is justly determin'd to be the Time of their *Penance*; who have, tho' *unwillingly*, been engaged in Blood. Yet here, as before, the Disposition of the Party should come into the Account; that if his Compunction appear to be Real and Cordial, the precise Number of Years should not too rigorously be insisted on; but that he should sooner be restor'd to all Church-Privileges, by shortning the Time of his *Penance* and *Segregation*.

If any one should be in imminent Danger of Death, who hath not gone through his Discipline for the whole Time assign'd him; the Clemency of the Fathers hath then determin'd, that he should not be suffer'd to enter upon his long (last) Journey, without being furnish'd with a Provision for it, nor without a Participation of the Holy Mysteries. But if, after having been permitted to partake of them, the Party should happen to recover, (i) he is then to abide the Time allotted him, and to continue in the *Station*, wherein the Necessity and the Danger

as now, that for the same Fault, a Man was not to be punish'd twice; therefore not once with *Degradation*, and again afterwards, with *Segregation*. See in *Basil. ad Amphilocho. Canonic. Epist. can. No. 3*, compar'd with *Apost. Can. No. 25*. Yet this was, I conceive, a Rule, which held only in the *less* heinous Instances of Sin; for in the *greater*, Clergy-Men, 'tis plain, were not only *degraded*, but *Segregated*, and in Cases of Contumacy excommunicated; witness the Case of *Paulus Samosatenus*, mention'd in pag. 133, 134, of this Treatise, and the 54th Apostolick Canon; and here in pag. 120, Note (f.) *cited*

(i) See pag. 221, Note (77.)

ger found him, in regard to which, he was permitted to Communicate.

There is yet another Species of Idolatry, (for so the Blessed Apostle denominates Covetousness) which hath escap'd, I know not how, the Censure of the Fathers, and seems indeed, to have been overlook'd by them.

This, in reality, is a Complex Disposition, arising from a Mixture, and blending together, of those Three Affections in the Soul, which have here been mention'd.

For *First*, as to the Rational; *That* manifestly errs in the Judgment it makes of what is truly Good; by taking those things to be so, which are found in the *material* World, and by neglecting all Spiritual, *Immaterial* Excellence. Then again; the *Concupiscible* inclines in this Case to Inferior Objects, diverting from what is justly and properly desirable.

Even the *Irascible* it self, takes many Occasions *hence*, of gratifying its peevish and froward Disposition.

In Sum, I will venture to pronounce, that this whole Distemper does entirely agree with the Apostle's Character of Covetousness, who not only calls it *Idolatry*, but the *Root of all Evil*.

Yet this Species of Evil, hath been quite overlook'd, and unregarded by the Ancient Fathers, from whence it comes to pass, that it abounds exceedingly in the Church of Christ; and *no Person who is (k) brought before the Clergy,*
to

(k) *οὐδεὶς τὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀγομένους παρεστῶτα*, &c.] This I have Translated; *No Person who is brought before the Clergy*, &c.—Because I think, the Sense will hardly consist without such a rendering; and because it was conformable

16 The APPENDIX. Numb. 1
to be examin'd as to his Life and Conversation,
is at all examin'd upon this Article, whether he
be Innocent, or Nocent.

But since this hath been omitted by the Fa-
thers, and no Rule is given us concerning it, it
may suffice to the Cure of it, that, As some Di-
stempers arising from a Plethorick Constitution,
are remov'd by gentle Evacuations, so, we should
endeavour to alleviate and soften the Guilt of
Covetousness, by (1) *Prayer and Deprecation.*

Only Theft, and the Violation of Burial-
Places, we are taught by the Holy Fathers, to
place among Sins which are to be expiated by
Solemn Penance. 'Tis true, that the Scriptures
forbid Usury and Extortion, with all those cor-
rupt and fraudulent ways of Gain, howsoever
varnish'd with the Appearances of Bargain and
Contract, which injuriously transfer the Proper-
ty of others, to our own Possession. But since
the Ancient Canons of the Church, are the *Rules*
of our present Discipline, I shall only presume
to add, to what hath been already suggested,
the Sentence and the Judgment, which *they* have
allotted to the Cases mentioned.

Theft, then, is divided into Two Sorts; *viz.*
that, open Robbery, which is attended with Force
and Violence; and that more *Clancular*, and secret
Practice of House-breaking, and *Stealing privately.*

The

ble to the Usage then obtaining; which was to *accuse* People
Guilty of great enormities in the Ecclesiastical Consistory;
which had (then) otherguise Privileges and Prerogatives than
it hath at present; and if any Person (*then*) were known to
be Conscious of another's Crimes, which were of Ecclesiasti-
cal Cognisance, without revealing them, he was (*himself*)
accounted Criminal, and punishable accordingly, by Eccle-
siastical Censures. See *Basil. ad Amphiloach. Can. 71.*

Bishop Beveridge.

(1) See what is written and cited in pag. 196. Note (g)
of the preceeding Tract.

The *Design* of both is indeed the same, viz. *In-
vading another's Property, and transferring it to
themselves, without Right or Reason.* But the Dis-
position of Mind, wherewith that *Design* is pro-
secuted, is very different in the one from what
it is in the other. For the *Open Robber* hath
Murder in his Views and Purposes, should it
prove necessary to him to gain his Point, and to
reach what he aims at; Accordingly he comes
provided for it with Arms and Strength, and
chuses moreover a fit Place for it; so that such
an one must be put under the Discipline due to
Murderers, if he offers to return into the Church,
through the Door of *Penance*.

Whereas if he, who hath transferred to him-
self the Property of another, by *Secret Theft*,
shall unfold his Offence to the Priest by *Secret
Confession*, it will be sufficient to cure the Guilt
he hath thence contracted, by a quite ^(m) *contrary
Disposition*, and by the *Reverse of his former
Practice*; I mean by liberal Alms, to weed out
that *Covetous Humour*, which led him into his Sin.
But if he hath not wherewith to do *this*, he hath
however his Body left him, and should there-
fore expiate his Crime in that Case, by assidu-
ous Labour; according to that of the Apostle,
*Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him
labour, working with his Hands the thing which is
good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*,
Ephes. 4. 28.

B b

As

(m) There is no doubt, but that the Holy Father included
in a *contrary Disposition*, the sincere *Desire of Restitution*, e-
specially since he adds to it, the *Reverse of his former Practice*;
and recommends Acts of *Charity*, which are ever subsequent
to those of *Justice*, and do indeed presuppose them.

As to the Violation of Graves and Burial-Places, *That* is likewise divided into an Offence which is *pardonable*, and that which is *not* so.

For if any one, to save Charges, applies the Stones or Materials, to some other Purpose, which are usually thrown up before the Burial-Places of the Dead, yet so as not to leave the Corpse expos'd to the Air or Light, or otherwise in any way abus'd or injur'd: This, indeed, is far enough from meriting *Commendation*; but Custom however hath made it *Excusable*, since the Publick reaps here some Benefit, by an Application of the Materials to a more useful Purpose.

But to rake into the Ashes, and to disturb the Bones of the Dead, in view of pilfering the Cloaths or other Ornaments, wherewith they may be buried, this is a Crime which must be punish'd with the Discipline due to *Simple Fornication*, as is before recited. The Officer however, who is intrusted with executing it, is here as before, permitted to shorten the Time of it, as he shall judge it expedient, from the Life and Circumstances of the Party put under it.

As to *Sacrilege*; *That*, under the old Law, was censured with the same Severity as *Murder* was; the Sentence of *Both* being, That the Party should be stoned to Death, who was Guilty of *either*. But Ecclesiastical Custom hath led, I know not how, to a milder Construction of *Sacrilege*, than what was heretofore made of it; and the Guilt contracted by it, hath been cancell'd at less Expence; since as we receive it indeed from the Fathers, the Punishment is of shorter continuance than *that* for *Adultery*.

But in this, as well as in every other Species of Sin, the Disposition and Temper of the Party under Discipline, are of principal Account; for

as

as to the Length and Continuance of the Punishment, *That* alone will go a very little way towards a Cure of the Distemper, to which it is applied; the Heart and Mind of the Patient, the Frame and Constitution of his Soul, being All in All.

These Directions, O Man of God, I have put together with as much Diligence as I could in so short a time, and have sent them to you in Testimony of that Esteem and Regard, which we ought always to entertain for our Brethren, and for any Requests they shall happen to make us.

You, in your Turn, will not, I trust, intermit your Prayers to God for me. You owe me the Grateful Acknowledgments of a Son, whom I have begotten to God, and should accordingly give me what Support you can in my old Age, from your Prayers and Intercessions; that so, according to the Sanction of the Fifth Commandment, it may be well with you, and that, *your Days may be long in the Land.*

This Letter will serve as a Proof of my Respects to you, and as a (*n*) Token of the Fellowship and Communion which I hold with you. *You*, for *your* Part, will not I hope, despise my *Present*, for being a *small* one, although indeed, a Man of your worth, does always deserve a better.

B b 2

NUMB.

(*n*) σύμβολον ἱερουργικόν.] This I presume to have alluded to some *Tessera*, or *Watch-word*; some *Token*, (as I have here Translated it) or Mark of Distinction, whereby Clergy-Men in their Travels; were known to each other, and acknowledged as *Orthodox*, by those who entertained them. The Guest (it should seem) who was thus entertained, left behind him (τὸ ξένιον) some small *Present* in acknowledgment of the Civilities he had there receiv'd. And to these our Author seems to have alluded in the close of this his Letter, to Bp. *Acton*.

N U M B. II.

The Account of Socrates, the Ecclesiastical Historian, (Book 5. Chap. 19.) Concerning the Office of Penitentiary in the Primitive Church. Translated from the Greek.

ABOUT the same Time (*viz.* in the Reign of *Valentinian Junior*, and *Theodosius*.) it seem'd Good to those in Authority, that the Penitentiary's Office should be abolish'd, and that upon the Occasion, whereof an Account is here intended.

Upon the Separation of *Novatus* and his Party, from the Church, because they were unwilling to hold Communion with such as had *lapsed* in the *Decian* Persecution (from that Period of Time) the Bishops had added to the (o) *Ecclesiastical Roll*, a Presbyter, whose peculiar Office it should be, to manage the Concerns of Penitents, who having fallen into Sin after Baptism, were (thence forwards) to *confess* their *Crimes* to the Presbyter so appointed.

This Regulation is still in Force with all other Sects, only the (p) *Homoousians*, and such of the *Novatians* as agree with the former, in the disputed Article of the *Trinity*, have entirely rejected it.

As

(o) The *Ecclesiastical Roll*, was a List of the Clergy belonging to each Episcopal Church, which was preserved in the Archives of it.

(p) The *Homoousians*, (it may be fit to inform the less learned Reader) were those who held with the Church, that the Son was *Consubstantial*, or of the same Substance with the Father.

As to the *Novatians*, they never indeed stood in need of it; and the *Homoousians*, who are now in Possession of the Churches, after having long retained this Institution, did in the Time of *Nectarius*, abolish it, upon a certain foul Practice which was discover'd to have been committed in one of their Churches, by Occasion of it.

For a Lady of Quality, resorting to one of these Penitentiaries, had *confessed* the Sins to him, which she had committed after her Baptismal Engagements; the Penitentiary directed her to employ a great deal of her Time in Fasting and Prayer, that so with her *Confession*, she might give likewise an *Example of Works meet for Repentance*.

In Process of Time, she confesses another Enormity to him, whereof she had been Guilty, *viz.* That she had been Naught with a certain Deacon of that Church. Upon the Scandal arising from the *Publication* of this heinous Fact, the Deacon was for his Part, degraded; but the People notwithstanding, were mightily discompos'd, and a great Ferment was rais'd by it amongst them; not only in regard to the Atrocity of the Crime, but in regard also to the Infamy, which this Accident might bring upon the Church.

When therefore the whole Ecclesiastical Order was Impeach'd and Traduc'd upon this Account, one *Eudemon*, a Presbyter of the Church, and of *Alexandrian* Extraction, advis'd *Nectarius*, (who then was Bishop of *Constantinople*) to abolish the Office of Penitentiary, and to strike his Name out of the *Ecclesiastical Roll*, and to (q) allow
B b 3 every

(q) Hence therefore it should seem, that before resorting to Communion, it had hitherto been the Custom for the People to consult with this Penitentiary, upon their respective
Fitnelles

every Man to Communicate thenceforwards, as his own Conscience should direct him; inasmuch as there appeared no other way to rescue the Church from the Disgrace and Obloquy, to which this Misfortune had expos'd her.

Having had this Account from *Eudamon* himself (who was Author of the aforementioned Council) I am the more bold to give it a Place in my History. For, as I have often said, I have all along been as careful as I could, to learn the Facts which I pretend to relate, from the best and most credible Authorities, and to make a very exact Enquiry into them, that I might be sure of committing nothing to Writing, but what should be to a Tittle true.

When *Eudamon* told me what I here have laid before my *Reader*, I presently replied to him; "Whether your Advice will be of Use, or Detriment to the Church, God only knows." But now I see plainly, that it hath given an Handle, and an Occasion for discontinuing that wholesome Practice, of reprehending one another's Sins; and for neglecting that Apostolical Precept, which directs us, *To have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darknes;* but rather to *reprove them*, Ephes. 5. 11.

Fitnesses for that Holy *Ordinanec*, and in order thereunto, to lay before him the State of their Consciences, with regard to such Sins, as they had severally committed.

N U M B.

N U M B. III.

Sozomen's *Account of the same Matter*, in Book 7. Chap. 17. *Translated likewise from the Greek.*

ABout this Juncture of Time, *Nectarius* (Bishop of *Constantinople*) discontinu'd the Office of the Presbyter who was specially appointed to take Care of Penitents, and the Bishops of the Churches all round him soon follow'd his Example.

What was properly the Office of this Presbyter, from whence it took its Rise, and whence its Discontinuance, others perhaps may relate in a different Manner; but for my own Part, I shall give the Reader what I think a just Account of it.

Since then to be quite exempt from Sin, requires a Degree of Perfection, which is incompatible with the present State of human Nature; since God hath appointed for those who truly repent, even tho' they should sin (r) *again and again*, a Pardon; and since it was necessarily incumbent upon such as sued for that Pardon, to *confess* the Sin which stood in need of it; the Bishops (it should seem) from the very Beginning, thought it an intolerable Burden (with Respect both to themselves and to

B b 4

the

(r) *Again and again*, was not the Language of purer Antiquity, as the Reader may have observ'd in the foregoing Treatise. For however God might pardon such repeated Sins, yet those which were judg'd to deserve solemn Penance, were but *once* admitted to it.

the Penitents who came before them) to be forc'd upon publishing, in the Face of their respective Congregations, all the Sins which were thus confess'd to them; and therefore they selected some one of their Presbyters, of the best Reputation amongst them, for Prudence and Taciturnity, to preside over, and to manage this whole Affair. To him Offenders were thence-forwards to resort, and to lay open before him the State of their Lives and Actions. He, according to the Nature and Quality of each Person's Sin, was to prescribe them what to do, and how to behave for the future; what Austerities they were to submit to, and how to afflict their own Souls; and when his Directions had been comply'd with, he then *absolv'd* them.

As to the *Novatians*, they indeed making no Account of the *penitential Discipline*, could have no Occasion either for this Office it self, or for the Officer entrusted with it. But all other Sects retain them both to this Day. The *Western Churches*, and especially the *Roman*, have them in frequent Use, and in great Esteem. For there a *publick Station* is appointed for *Penitents*, where they stand under great Appearances of Lamentation and Sorrow; and when so much of the Liturgy is finish'd, as to the Dismission of the Catechumens, without partaking of the Holy Mysteries with the *Faithful*, they (the Penitents) prostrate themselves with Sighs and Groans upon the Ground; the Bishop meets them in this Posture with Tears, and prostrates himself with them; the whole Congregation joins with them in their Mourning; then the Bishop first rises, and raises those who as yet are prostrate; and after putting up proper Prayers
to

to God for penitent Sinners, he dismisses them. So much for the publick. But then every Man of them, for himself in *private*, mortifies himself with all Manner of Austerities, as he is directed by the Bishop, whose Appointments he punctually observes, and waits contentedly the Time, which is thus allotted him for his Continuance under the fore-mention'd Rigours; Then when the Period assign'd him is finish'd, and the Debt, as it were, is cancell'd, his Sin is remitted, and he associates, as before, with the rest of the *Faithful*. This hath been the Usage of the *Roman Church*, from the very Beginning to our present Age. (§)

• But in the Church of *Constantinople*, there was a distinct Presbyter appointed to take Care of Penitents, 'till a Lady of Quality was directed by one of these Presbyters, to fast and pray for certain Sins which she had confess'd to him; and whilst she was in Pursuance of these Directions, and spent a great deal of her Time in the Church, it appear'd at last, that she was naught with a Deacon belonging to it.

The People grew exasperated with the Indignity which herein was offer'd to the Church, and the Clergy were mightily reproach'd upon this Account. *Nectarius* was much at a Loss, what to do in this untoward Business; however, he degraded the Deacon who had thus offended;

(§) The Reader should not have been troubled with the Repetition of this Account out of *Sozomen*, which before was given him in No. 2. from *Socrates*; but for the additional Relation which *Sozomen* hath inserted of the *Western Customs* with Regard to Penitents, and for the Testimony he hath given to the Continuance of the penitential Discipline in those Churches, so late as to the Period which himself liv'd in, viz. the latter End of the 5th Century.

fended; and upon the Advice of some, who counselled him to admit all to communicate, as their own Consciences should direct or embolden them, he finally abolish'd the Office of the penitentiary Presbyter; which Constitution of his hath remain'd in Force from that Time to the present.



N U M B. IV.

The Prayer for Penitents, accompany'd with Imposition of Hands. In Constitut. Apostol. Book 8. Chap. 9. Translated from the Greek.

A Lmighty and Eternal God, Lord of the Universe, Creator and Governor of all Things, who thro' thy Son Jesus Christ hast (t) cleansed Man, and made him the Ornament of this lower World, and hast given him a Law in his Heart, as well as a written Word, that he might live according to thy Will, as becomes a reasonable Creature; and after he had sinned, didst extend thy Goodness towards him, to lead him to Repentance: Thou, who desirest not the Death

(t) Whether these Words are rightly translated, because it is pretty hard to reach the Spirit of the Original in our Language, I shall submit to the Judgment of the learned Reader. The Words of the Original, are, ἀνθρώπον κόσμῳ κόσμον ἐποίησας. where the Ambiguity of the Words κόσμος and κόσμον, leaves Room for a Diversity in the rendring. In the Construction I have given of them, I have endeavour'd to take in both the Senses to which they are applicable.

Death of a Sinner, but wouldest rather that he should turn from his evil Way, and live; Look graciously upon these thy Servants, who here bow down themselves before thee in Humiliation and Repentance. Thou, who didst accept the Repentance of the *Ninevites* turning to thee; who wouldest have all Men to be sav'd, and come to the Knowledge of thy Truth. Thou, who didst receive with a Fatherly Compassion thy prodigal Son, though he had spent all his Substance in riotous living, seeing at last that he was sorry for his Sin; Receive in like Manner, we most humbly beseech thee, the Supplications of those who turn now unto thee in penitential Tears; for there is none amongst us, who sinneth not against thee, and in thy Sight; and if thou, Lord, shouldst be extream to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide with thee? But there is Mercy with thee; Extend it therefore, we earnestly beg, to these thy Servants; Restore them to the Bosom of thy holy Church, and to the Place and Station which they before held in it, thro' Jesus Christ our Saviour; By whom, in the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Adoration ascribed to thee, World without End. *Amen.* (u)

(u) This Prayer was in constant Use at each Assembly for solemn Worship. When it was finish'd, the Deacon proclaim'd, *Depart all you who are in the Station of Penance;* and added moreover, *Let none depart but those who are appointed. Let us who are in the Number of the Faithful, pray to God thro' his Son Christ.*

Then follow'd the bidding Prayer, the Oblation, &c. See in this Appendix, No. 1. Note (a) a farther Account of the primitive Worship.

N U M B. V.

Divers Prayers at receiving Penitents to Penance, at bearing their Confession, and at absolving them. Translated from the Greek, and taken out of the Penitential of Johannes Jejunator, who was rais'd to the See of Constantinople, An. Dom. 585.

“ **W**HEN the Penitent was plac'd before
 “ the Altar, the penitential Service be-
 “ gan with chanting certain Psalms, viz. 24,
 “ 50, 31, 69, 101.
 “ After which, and the Use of some other
 “ Formularies, the Priest put up the following
 “ Prayer, before receiving the Penitent's Con-
 “ fession.

O Lord our God, the Father and Lord of all Men, who beholdest all Things, and dost indulgently extend thy Pardon to such as turn unto thee from their sinful Ways: Thou, who hadst Compassion upon thy Servant *David*, confessing his Sin unto thee, and didst prolong the Life of *Hezekias* upon his humble Supplication; and didst accept the Conversion of *Manasses*, and deliver him from his manifold Troubles: Thou, who didst forgive *Peter* and the Harlot, approaching to thee with penitential Tears; who didst justify the Publican when he bewailed his Guilt; who didst receive the Prodigal with the Arms of a tender Parent; who wouldst have all to be sav'd, and come to the Knowledge

ledge of thy Truth; who dost rejoyce at the Repentance of a Sinner, and desirest not his Death, but wouldst rather that he should be converted, and live: Do thou, O most merciful Saviour, hearken, I beseech thee, to my Intercession, the Intercession of thy unprofitable and unworthy Servant; who thro' the Multitude of my own Sins, am indeed unworthy to call upon thy holy Name. But inasmuch as I am invested with the Character of thy *Priest*, and by thy Commandment am appointed to receive the Confession of those who acknowledge their Sins unto thee; I approach the Foot-stool of thy Throne, though with Fear and Trembling. Hear me, therefore, O Lord, according to the Multitude of thy Mercies, though I have sinned against thee, and receive the Confession of thy Servant who is now before thee; and whatsoever Guilt he may have contracted, either through Frailty, or through Wilfulness, by Thought, Word, or Deed, do thou, I beseech thee, in much Mercy forgive it; for thou only canst do it; and therefore before thee we prostrate our selves in fervent Prayer, and do glorify thy holy Name; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Praise and Honour, now and ever.

“ After having put up this Prayer (it should seem) by himself, and after having given some proper Admonitions to the Penitent, the Priest receiv'd his Confession, and then proceeded (in the Optative Way) to express his Wishes and Desires, that God would shew him Mercy, and extend his Pardon to him. And this he did in some one, or more, of the Forms following.”

First

First F O R M.

God, the Lord Christ Jesus, our Ruler and Governor, pardon thee all thy Sins, which thou hast confess'd to me, his unworthy Servant, in his All-seeing Presence.

Second F O R M.

God, who by his Servant *Nathan*, pardon'd the Sins of *David* upon his humble Confession; who moreover forgave *Peter*, tho' he had deny'd him, upon his weeping bitterly; and absolv'd the Harlot lying prostrate, and wailing at his blessed Feet; and shewed Mercy to *Ma-
tthias*, and the Publican, and the prodigal Son: He who also said, *Confess your Sins to one another*; May that same Lord Jesus Christ forgive you every Sin, which you have here confess'd in his Sight, to me his unworthy Servant, and present you faultless before his Judgment-Seat, who is blessed for evermore.

Third F O R M.

God, who for our sakes became Man, and bore the Sins of the whole World, will also relieve thee, my Beloved, from the Burden of those Sins which thou hast now confess'd, before him, to me his unworthy Servant, and will pardon them both in this Life, and in that which is to come; inasmuch as he wills, and longs for, and grants Salvation to all, who is himself blessed for ever. (v)

“ The

(v) This Form is merely declarative, and seems to have been only design'd for the Penitent's Comfort, and to intimate the Opinion of the Priest, that his Case was hopeful.

“ The Priest did then proceed to use some
“ one, or more, of the following Intercessions
“ for the Penitent’s Pardon. ”

First P R A T E R.

O Lord our Saviour, who by thy Prophet *Nathan*, didst remit the Sin of thy Servant *David*, humbling himself before thee in penitential Sorrow, and didst hearken to the Prayer of penitent *Manasses*; Receive, O Lord, to thy wonted Compassions, this thy Servant, who here confesses his Sins before thee, and truly repents of them: For thou, O Lord, didst command the Forgiveness of Sins until seventy times seven; because, as is thy Majesty, so is thy Mercy. Thou art the God of those who truly repent, and dost thy self condescend to grieve at our Backslidings. To thee therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, we render all Honour and Glory, now and ever.

Second P R A T E R.

O Lord our God and Governor, who callest the Righteous to Sanctification, and Sinners to make them righteous; Accept, I beseech thee, the Repentance of this thy Servant; and as he here humbles himself before thee in the Confession of his Sins, so do thou cleanse him from all the Guilt, wherewith his carnal Will may have defiled him; wash off all Stains from his Conscience, and make him pure; strengthen him with thy Might, in fulfilling thy Commandments,

(w) *Dispose*

(w) *Dispose and qualify him for the Remission of all his Sins*; that being cleansed both in Body and Mind; he may become a fit Habitation for thy Spirit, and be render'd thereby an Heir of thy Kingdom, thro' the Mercies and the Merits of thy only begotten Son; with whom, and with the blessed all-quickning Spirit, thou livest and reignest, now and ever.

Third P R A T E R.

O Lord God of our Salvation, who art merciful and compassionate, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness; who grieveest for our Wickedness, nor wouldst the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should turn from his Wickedness, and live; Be thou intreated for this thy Servant; grant him the Forgiveness of all his Sins, accept an Atonement for his Iniquities, and pardon whatsoever he may have committed against thee, either thro' Infirmary, or thro' wilful Guilt. Be propitious to him, I most humbly beseech thee, and unite him to thy holy Church, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee, and the most holy all-quickning Spirit, be ascrib'd Might, Majesty, and Domination, now and ever.

Fourth P R A T E R.

O Lord Jesu Christ, the Son of the living God; the Shepherd, who carest for thy Flock; the Lamb, who takest away the Sins of the
World:

(w) This Manner of Expression shews, that his Sins were not understood to be *remitted* by any of these Forms; which were therefore only preparatory to his Absolution.

World: Thou, who didst graciously remit to the two Debtors what they ow'd thee; and didst pardon the Woman who was a Sinner, coming unto thee; and besides the Forgiveness of the Paralytick's Sin, didst grant him moreover a Cure of his Disease; Do thou, O Lord, spare, forgive, and pardon whatsoever this thy Servant may have committed disobediently against thee, either through Ignorance, or with Knowledge; through Infirmary, or with wilful Guilt, If as a Man, encompass'd with Flesh and Blood, or as an Inhabitant of this World of Sin, he hath in any Thing been beguil'd, through the Fraud of the Devil, and proceeded thence against the Light of Reason, either in Word or Deed, ignorantly or knowingly, (x) *by any Heretical Pravity, or thro' a judicial Blindness; or by any Imprecation rashly drawn by himself upon his own Head;* May it please thee, whatever it be, to overlook and to forgive it, according to thine abundant Mercies, and to release him from the Bond wherewith it may any Way have bound him. O Lord our God, I beseech thee hearken to my *Intercession* for him, and impute not his Sins unto him; but according to thy great Goodness, deliver him from thine eternal Wrath. For thou art the God who hast said, *Whomsoever ye shall bind on Earth, he shall be bound in Heaven, and whomsoever ye shall loose on Earth, he shall be loosed in Heaven.* Thou art a God who dost

C c

not,

(x) εἰς λόγῳ αἰρέσεως, εἰς τὸ κατὰ τὸν ἐξουσίῳ, εἰς ἰδίᾳ ἀναθέμῃ; ὡς πρὸς τὸ ὅρον.

Because the Meaning of these Words is somewhat obscure and uncertain, I have given them for the learned Reader to make his own Judgment of them; and either to correct or approve mine, as he pleases.

not, nor canst do Evil, and art able to forgive Sins. To thee therefore, and to the eternal Father, and to thy holy all-quickning Spirit, we ascribe all Honour and Glory, from henceforth for ever.

Fifth P R A Y E R.

O Lord our Father, deliver not this thy Servant into the Power of the Devil, and let not our Enemies prevail against us. Put into his Mouth the Observation of thy Laws, and seal up his Lips, that no deceitful Word may proceed from them. Remove from him a proud Look, and cleanse him from all sensual and naughty Dispositions. Let no Spirit of Conceit, nor Obstinacy, nor any Deceitfulness of Tongue, remain in him. Possess his Mind with a Spirit of Goodness, and let no unclean Spirit abide with, or pollute him. Avert all Evil from him, and cancel all the Debt he hath contracted by his Sin. Look down upon him from Heaven, and make him glad with the Joy of thy Countenance; for in thee hath he put his Trust. Let him not therefore become a Prey to the Devil: For thou hast deliver'd us from eternal Death, thro' the Grace of Christ, with whom, and with the Holy all-quickning Spirit, thou art blessed for evermore.

“ After the Use of the foregoing Prayers,
 “ there succeeded certain Admonitions and Ex-
 “ hortations, with some Portions of Scripture
 “ applicable to the present Purpose: And then
 “ Directions were given for the Penitent's Be-
 “ haviour, and for the Mortifications he was
 “ to submit to. So that all hitherto seems to
 “ have

“ have been no more, nor other than receiving
 “ the Party to Penance, which was ever per-
 “ form’d with great Solemnity, with proper
 “ Prayers, and with Imposition of Hands.

“ When the penitential Course which was
 “ now assign’d the Penitent, had been gone
 “ thro’, the Party thus bound, was loosed in one
 “ or both of the *Forms* subjoin’d.

First Form of Absolution.

Most merciful, compassionate, and gracious
 God, who, according to thine abundant Pity,
 hast sent thine only begotten Son into the
 World, to blot out the Hand-writing which was
 against us, and to loose us from the Chains
 wherewith our Sins had bound us, and to preach
 Redemption to the Captives, and to disarm
 Death of its Sting; Do thou, O Lord, vouch-
 saie to deliver this thy Servant here prostrate
 before thee, from the *Toak* he is at present un-
 der, and to loose him from the *Bond* which is
 impos’d upon him; Grant to him that he may
 at all Times, and in all Places, approach the
 Throne of thy Glory, without offending thee,
 and without defiling his own Conscience, and
 there present his Supplications to the Riches of
 thy Grace, because thou art a merciful and gra-
 cious God; to whom (Father, Son, and Holy
 Ghost) we humbly ascribe all Honour and Glo-
 ry, now and ever.

Second Form of Absolution.

O God, our Lord and Governor, who didst
 present thy self to thy Disciples, when the
 Doors were shut, after having said, *Peace be un-*

to you; *whosoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retained*: Do thou, O Lord God, according to that invisible Almighty Power wherewith thou presidest over all Things, graciously look upon this thy Servant, and by my Ministry, tho' I am my self a grievous Sinner, wash away his Guilt, and remove the Causes thro' which he hath contracted it; that he who is *bound* by the *Discipline* of the Church, may be *loosed* from the Sin which brought him under it; through thy Grace and Compassion, O merciful God, whose holy Name (Father, Son, and blessed Spirit) be praised and magnified, now and for evermore.

N U M B. VI.

Certain Extracts from the Capitular of Theodorus, Arch-bishop of Canterbury, as publish'd by Monsieur Petit; which represent to us the Form of the penitential Discipline, as it stood in those Days.

“ **U**PON *Ash-Wednesday* (call'd anciently
 “ *Caput Jესunii*, or *Caput Quadragesima*) all
 “ publick Penitents were to place themselves be-
 “ fore the Doors of the Episcopal Church, bare-
 “ foot, and cloth'd with Sack-cloth, and with
 “ all suitable Appearances of Mourning and
 “ Humiliation. Their respective penitentiary
 “ Priests were to attend them, and all together
 “ were to present themselves before the Bishop,
 “ who was to lead them into the Church, and
 “ with

“ with his whole Clergy attending and joining
 “ with him, to chant the seven penitential
 “ Psalms in a Posture of Prostration, in order
 “ to their Penance and Absolution. Then ri-
 “ sing from Prayer, he was to sprinkle Ashes o-
 “ ver them, and so to lay his Hands upon them,
 “ and solemnly to pronounce their Expulsion
 “ out of the Church. Accordingly the Deacons
 “ were to see the Church-doors shut upon them,
 “ and then the Clergy following them, brought
 “ them back into the Church. The Bishop ha-
 “ ving admonish’d them upon the Heads of the
 “ greater Sins, and examin’d their Conduct with
 “ Regard to them, and receiv’d their Desires
 “ of his *Intercession* to God for them, together
 “ with their Promises of better Care for the fu-
 “ ture, (he then) proceeded to the following
 “ Forms, wherein he admitted them to Pe-
 “ nance, and afterwards absolv’d them; each
 “ (it should seem) separately, and so restor’d
 “ them to Communion; tho’ the entire Process
 “ of this Affair might take up, I presume,
 “ the whole *Lent*-Season.

First F O R M.

Christ, the Son of God, have Compassion on you; and grant you to perform acceptable (y) Penance; May he give you moreover a sound

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Faith,

(y) Hence it should seem (and it appears indeed otherwise from the penitential Directions, being postpon’d to the Absolution) that the Penance now assign’d to Penitents was, according to the modern Practice of the *Roman* Church, perform’d after their Absolution. But then it will be hard to conclude, in what Age of the Church this Practice began; or indeed to determine hence, that it had any footing in the Time of *Theodorus*, since the Representation is so confus’d and imperfect, and the Penitential (however for the main his own) hath certainly been interpolated since his Time by foreign and later Authors.

faith, a lively Hope, a perfect Charity, true Humility and Wisdom, Soberness and Patience, perseverance in good Works, and an happy End. God of his abundant Mercy pardon you all your Sins, present, pass'd, and future; May his holy Spirit enlighten you, may he guide all your Senses, inspire you with holy Thoughts and Purposes, save your Soul, and bring you finally to Life Eternal.

Second F O R M.

Christ, the Son of the living God, assist and enable you to persevere in good Works all the Days of your Life, and bring you, at the Conclusion of it, to Life Eternal.

Third F O R M.

O God, whose Compassions we all stand in need of, remember, we beseech thee, this thy Servant, who here presents himself before thee, despoil'd of thy Grace thro' the Infirmities of his Flesh; Pardon him, we pray thee, upon his humble Confession, and spare him upon the devout Supplications which he makes unto thee, that he, whom his Sins have accus'd to thy Justice, may by thy Mercy be absolv'd and sav'd.

Fourth F O R M.

Holy Lord, Almighty Father, and Eternal God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, hast been pleas'd to heal the Wounds and Bruises of our Sins; Thou, who forgivest all Wickedness, and pardonest all Iniquity; To thee wee humbly bow our selves, and beseech thee

thee to incline thy merciful Ears to our Prayers, which we make before thee, on the Behalf of this thy Servant, that thou wouldst graciously remit his Guilt, and grant him Comfort and Gladness, for the Time wherein he hath suffered Adversity; that thou wouldst mercifully vouchsafe him Life, (instead of the Death which his Sins have merited) and give him at last a sure Access to Life Eternal.

Fifth F O R M.

Almighty and most merciful God, who hast made the Confession of Sin a Condition of thy Pardon to it; Mercifully come in to the Succour of this thy Servant, who hath done Wickedness in thy Sight, and hath confess'd it before thee; that he who is ty'd and bound with the Chain of his Sins, may be loosed by the Pityfulness of thy great Mercy.

Sixth F O R M.

Almighty and everlasting God, pardon, we beseech thee, of thine infinite Goodness, the Sins of this thy Servant, who hath here most humbly confess'd them to thee; that the Conscience of his Guilt may not call louder for Punishment, than the Pityfulness of thy Mercy may plead for his Forgiveness.

Seventh F O R M.

O Lord, I humbly beseech thy Majesty, and implore thy Mercy for this thy Servant, that thou wouldst be pleas'd to pardon the Sins which he hath here confess'd unto thee, and

that thou wouldst remember no more against him his pass'd Iniquities. Thou, who hast represented thy self, as bringing back upon thy Shoulders the lost Sheep with Joy, and who didst receive the Publican, upon his humble Prayer and Confession to thee; Be thou also merciful to this thy Servant, and favourably receive the Prayers which he makes before thee, that after having (z) *appeas'd thy Wrath by his Acknowledgment of his Sin unto thee, he may continue hereafter in thy Fear and Favour.* Let his Prayers and his Tears ascend up speedily to thy Throne, and bring down thence thy Blessing upon him, that so being restor'd to the Privilege of thy *Sanctuary*, he may again be entitled to the Hope of thy Heavenly and Eternal Glory, who livest and reignest, &c.

Eighth F O R M.

The Almighty God be your Helper and Protector, and grant you the Pardon of all your Sins, pass'd, present, and future.

“ Divers of these Forms, I suppose to have
 “ been us'd both in the private and publick
 “ Absolutions; and tho' some of them may
 “ be later than the Age of *Theodorus*, yet they
 “ are

(z) *Ut in Confessione placabilis permaneat.* The Words are somewhat obscure; I have given them the Sense which I conceive to have been design'd by them, tho' they will hardly bear a literal Translation. *Placabilis*, according to the Barbarism of this Age, was, I suppose, meant to signify *conducting to appease*, or one who was capable of a *Reconciliation*. The former Sense was certainly intended in the old M. S. publish'd by Mr. *Petit*, of which some Account is here given in No. 8. where the Words are, *Ut in Confessione placabili permaneat.*

“ are all of them, we see, either *Precatory*
 “ or *Optative*, none as yet *Indicative* or *Peremp-*
 “ *tory*.



N U M B. VII.

Other Extracts from the Penitential of Ecbert, who was Arch-Bishop of York, from the Year 731, to (about) the Year 767, Publish'd by Morinus, and Translated from him.

“ **W**HEN any resorted to the Priest for
 “ Penance, the Priest was directed to
 “ retire, and thus to pray by himself in secret.”

O Lord God Almighty, be merciful, I beseech thee, to me a Sinner, that I may be rendered, through thy Grace, a fit *Mediator* between Thee and those who would now confess their Sins unto Thee; Thou who wouldst not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should be Converted and Live; Receive I intreat Thee, the Supplication of me thy unworthy Servant, which I make before Thee, on the Behalf of those who desire to return unto Thee by Repentance, that thou wouldst *Absolve* them from their Sins, and preserve them blameless all the rest of their Lives, through Jesus Christ, &c.

“ Another

" Another Formulary to the same Purpose,
 " out of *Theodorus* or *Bede*.

O Lord God Almighty, be merciful, I beseech Thee, to me a Sinner, that I may acceptably present my Thanks and Praises before Thee, for having constituted me, through thy undeserved Mercy, a Minister of thy Holy Priesthood, and a *Mediator* to *intercede* with our Lord Jesus Christ on the *Behalf* of Sinners, who desire to return unto him by Repentance: Therefore O Lord our Governour, who wouldst have all to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of thy Truth; who wouldst not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should be Converted and Live; Do thou receive the Prayers which I make before Thee, for these thy Servants, now returning unto Thee by Repentance; Give them a broken and a contrite Spirit, that they may recover from the Snare of the Devil, wherein they are now entangled; and graciously accept their Penance, as an Atonement for their Sins, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

" When the Penitents approach'd the Priest,
 " the Priest was further directed thus to pray
 " over them."

O God, who clearest the Hearts of all who confess their Sins unto Thee, and loosest all those from the *Bond* of Sin, who accuse their Consciences before Thee; Give, I beseech Thee, Liberty to these Captives, and pour in Oil upon their Wounds, that being rescued from the Dominion of Sin, they may serve Thee acceptably, with pure Hearts, and with free Minds, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

" Ano-

“ Another Formulary to the same Purpose,
“ for a single Penitent.”

Grant to us, Lord, I beseech thee, that as thou wast reconciled to the *Publican* upon his Prayer, and his Confession of his Sin unto Thee, so Thou wouldst now be reconciled unto *this thy Servant*, that by his continuance in a State of mournful Confession and Prayer unto Thee, he may the sooner obtain thy merciful Pardon; and being *restored* to the Privilege of Communion with thy Church upon Earth, he may be again entituled to thy Kingdom in Heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“ The Party next for himself, before he made
“ his Confession, was to put up the following
“ Prayer.”

O God the Creator of all Things, who didst make and fashion me; my Redeemer, and my Judge, who hast given me the Will to confess my Sins unto Thee; Do thou remove from me all the Impediments of Shame and Bashfulness, that my Confession may be full and entire before Thee; that my love of Thee may prevail with me to keep nothing hid, nor to misrepresent what I have committed, by any too soft, or favourable Rehearsal of it. And if Thou wilt grant this to me, then shall I be satisfied, that I may come into the Number of thy Chosen Servants.

“ Then the Penitent was question'd by the
“ Priest (or Bishop) as to his Faith, &c. and
“ after having made his Confession, and desired
“ the

“ the Priest’s (or Bishop’s) Intercession for him,
“ the Priest (or Bishop) thus subjoined.”

The Almighty Lord, who said, *Whosoever shall confess me before Men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in Heaven*: Grant you his Blessing, and Remission of your Sins.

Or thus.

The Lord Christ Jesus look upon you, and grant you his Salvation, and inspire you with his Spiritual Gifts and Graces, that the Enemy may not be able in any thing to deceive, or to do you Violence. The Lord Jesus, who hath destroyed the Devil, and deliver’d us from the Punishment of Eternal Torments, receive you into his Gracious Protection, that through his Blessing and Favour, you may at last attain to the Kingdom of Heaven. The Lord God turn upon you the Light of his Countenance, and give you Peace all the Days of your Life. God of his Mercy hear your Prayer, and sanctify you throughout, that you may be perfect and entire, both in Body and Mind, and that the Day of our Saviour’s coming, may find you Blameless. May he grant you an Angel of Peace to guide and govern your Heart, both in this Life and in the next, and purify your Soul from all Stain of Guilt. The Lord defend you from all Evil, and from all the Accusations of your Ghostly Enemy, that when He shall come in his Glory, He may not reject you, but may receive you finally to the Felicity of his Kingdom.

“ If

“ If there were Time, the following Prayers
“ were added. ”

First P R A T E R.

Hearken O Lord, to these our Supplications, and remove not thy Mercy far from this thy Servant; heal his Sores, and pardon his Sins, that no Transgression of his may separate between him and Thee; but that he may always cleave to Thee, and may abide with Thee for ever.

Second P R A T E R.

O Lord God, whose Longsuffering is not wearied by our Sins, but who allowest us to appease thy Wrath by our Repentance, mercifully look upon this thy Servant, who confesses his Sin unto Thee; for to Thee it belongeth to forgive Sin, and to Absolve those who have offended Thee; who hast declared, *That thou wouldst rather the Repentance, than the Death of a Sinner.* Do Thou therefore, grant unto this thy Servant, that he may perform unto Thee acceptable Penance, for the Faults which he hath committed against Thee, and (a) *May by the Amendment of his Life, arrive at length to thy Eternal Blessedness, through Jesus Christ.*

Third P R A T E R.

O Lord, I humbly beseech thy Majesty, that thou wouldst pardon the Sins of this thy Servant, which he hath committed against Thee,
and

(a) Here is a Gap in the Penitential, which I have so far endeavoured to fill up, as to make the Sense entire.

and now confessed before Thee; Thou, who didst bring back the lost Sheep upon thy Shoulders, and who didst favourably receive the Prayer and Confession of the *Publican*; Do Thou, O Lord, accept in like manner, the Confession and Prayer of this thy Servant, that by his continuance in this humble Frame of Mind, he may the sooner attain thy Pardon, and being *Restor'd to the Communion of Saints*, and to the *Orainances of thy Church*, may, thence again be made capable of Inheriting thine Heavenly Kingdom.

“ When the whole Penitential Course was gone through, the Reconciliation followed, which was couch'd in some one or more of the Forms subjoined. ”

First F O R M,

Grant O Lord, to this thy Servant, Fruits meet for Repentance, that he may obtain the Pardon of his Sin, and so be *restored to thy Holy Church*, from the Unity of which, his Sin had separated him; through Jesus Christ.

Second F O R M.

Almighty and Everlasting God, release, I beseech Thee, this thy Servant, from the Sin which he hath here confessed before Thee; that the Guilt of his Conscience may call no louder for Punishment, than the Pitifulness of thy Mercy may plead for his Forgiveness, through Jesus Christ.

“ If there were Time, the following Formularies were added; otherwise the preceeding were judged sufficient.

Third

Third FORM.

O Lord, we humbly beseech thy Majesty, that Thou wouldst mercifully receive to thy Favour this thy Servant, who hath long been Disciplined with Penitential Rigours; that so being Cloathed with the Wedding-Garment, he may be meet for a *Restoration to thy Royal Table*, from which he hath been rejected; thro' Jesus Christ.

Fourth FORM.

O Lord, and Holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God, who wouldst not the Death of a Sinner, but desirest rather, that he should live; we humbly beseech thy Majesty to regard in much Mercy this thy Servant, here weeping and wailing before Thee; Look upon him here Prostrate at the Footstool of thy Throne, turn Thou his Heaviness into Joy, put off his Sackcloth, and gird him with Gladness; that after so long a *Separation from the Delicacies of thy Table*, he may henceforth be satisfied with the Plentifulness of thy House; and entering into the Chamber of Thee, O King! may praise and glorify thy Name, for ever and ever.

Fifth FORM.

O Lord hear our Prayers, and spare all those who confess their Sins unto Thee; that they whose Consciences by Sin are accused, by thy merciful Pardon may be Absolved, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sicut

Sixth F O R M.

Let thy mercy O Lord, prevent, we beseech Thee, this thy Servant, that all his Sins may be speedily pardoned by thine abundant Pity, through Jesus Christ.

“ Then a Blessing was pronounc'd upon the Penitent, in some one, or more, of the Forms following. ”

First F O R M of Benediction.

The Almighty God be merciful to you, pardon all your Sins, and deliver you from all Evil, preserve you in all Good, and lead you finally to Life Eternal, through Jesus Christ.

Second. F O R M.

God the Father bless you ; Jesus Christ protect and keep you ; The Holy Spirit enlighten you all the Days of your Life ; The Power of Christ preserve you ; the Lord pardon all your Trespases and Sins.

Third F O R M.

The Lord bless and keep you ; The Lord lift up his Countenance upon you, and show you Mercy ; The Lord turn his Face towards you, and give you Peace, who Liveth and Reigneth, &c.

Fourth F O R M.

The Lord God Almighty bless you, and establish your Heart by the abundant Aids of his Grace ; be your Instructor in all good Works ;
Give

ive you Prosperity, Peace and Salvation ;
ourish in you all Spiritual Comforts ; Enlarge
nd strengthen your Charity, and defend you
y his mighty Power from all the Machinations
f Men and Devils ; Enable you to do whatever
He shall require of you ; Remove from you the
Guilt of those Sins which you have committed,
and grant you the Grace you have always ask'd
of him, through Jesus Christ, &c.

“ This will suffice to give the Reader some
“ Notion of the old Penitential Formularies,
“ and to convince him, that the Office of the
“ Priest was hitherto that of *Mediator*, or *In-*
“ *tercessor* ; as well as that all *Absolutions*, whe-
“ ther *Publick* or *Private*, were evermore Relative
“ to a Course of *Penance*, either in *Publick* or in
“ *Private* ; and did suppose the *Right* and *Privi-*
“ *lege* of Communion had been *forfeited*, and *were*
“ *was* thereby *restored*. It is our Misfortune,
“ that we have none of these Formularies older
“ than the Sixth Century ; nor even these con-
“ vey'd to us without great and just Suspicion of
“ their having suffer'd from later mixtures.”

“ I shall now subjoin, out of the same Au-
“ thor, one further Directory for the Reception
“ and Reconciliation of *Clinical*, (or Sick-Bed)
“ Penitents.”

“ When the Priest came into the Presence of
“ the Sick, He ask'd, *Upon what Business he was*
“ *sent for* ? The Sick answer'd, (b) *To give me*
“ *Penance*. The Priest was then to reply ; *The*
“ *Lord Christ Jesus grant you his merciful Pardon.*
“ *But if God shall look graciously upon you, will*
“ *you go through the Penance which I now shall give*
“ *you ?*
D. d

(b) Ut mihi Pœnitentiam tradas.

you? And upon the Answer of the Sick in the Affirmative, the Priest, in token of giving him Penance, held Sackcloth over him, and signed the Breast of the Sick with the Sign of the Cross, in Ashes; and then subjoined some one or more of the following Prayers."

First P R A Y E R.

Receive, O Lord, we beseech Thee, the Supplications and Prayers which we make before Thee, for all thy Servants in Distress and Sickness. Replenish all those with thy Mercy, to whom we extend these Offices of our Charity, that we may rejoyce in thy Blessings upon them, through Jesus Christ.

Second P R A Y E R.

Eternal God, Holy and Almighty Father, extend we beseech Thee, thy merciful Aid to all those whom we visit in their Distress and Sickness; that whomsoever we approach with these our Charitable Offices, thy Spirit may take up his Abode in their Hearts, thro' Jesus Christ.

Third P R A Y E R.

Hear us, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God, and if there be any Distress or Sickness in the Dwelling of this thy Servant, let the Power of thy Majesty drive it hence, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.

N. B. The Three preceeding Prayers seem preparatory to the following Forms.

First

First F O R M.

O God, who wouldst have none to Perish, but wouldst rather, that all should come to Repentance and live; who so smitest the Sinner, that thy Correction is only the Harbinger of thy Love; who, as a tender Shepherd, bringest back thy lost Sheep upon thy Shoulders, into his proper Fold, leaving the Ninety and Nine who had never strayed, to fetch back again that which had wandred from Thee; We most humbly beseech Thee, that Thou wouldst *vouchsafe* in like manner, to *Absolve* this thy Servant, who lies here before Thee, having erred and strayed from thy ways like a lost Sheep; thro' the Mercies and the Merits of Jesus Christ.

Second F O R M.

O God, who didst add Fifteen Years to the Life of thy Servant *Ezechias*, raise up we beseech Thee, this thy Servant from the Bed of his Sickness, and by the same mighty Power restore his Health, through Jesus Christ.

Third F O R M.

O God, who by the Prayers of thy Holy Apostle *St. Peter*, didst raise thy Servant *Dorcas* to Life again; hear in like manner, we humbly beseech Thee, the Prayers which we offer before Thee for this thy Servant, whom we visit in thy Name, that by our *Intercession*, he may receive from Thee the Cure of all his Maladies, thro' Jesus Christ.

D d 2

Fourth

Fourth F O R M.

Look mercifully O Lord, upon this thy Servant, and assist him graciously; Let thy Hand (as well as mine) be upon the Bed of his Sick-ness, and assuage his Sufferings; least mine alone (who am my self a grievous Sinner) be not sufficient without Thee to relieve him. Do thou grant him therefore thy mighty Aid, that when we call upon thy Name, his Disease may leave him; and he may recover his former Health, to praise and glorify Thee in the Face of thy Church, through Jesus Christ.

Fifth F O R M.

Look graciously O Lord upon this thy Servant here lying under thy Hand in great Weakness of Body; comfort the Soul of thy Servant, the Work of thine Hands; that being amended by thy Chastisements, he may always acknowledge Thee for his Saviour and Deliverer, through Jesus Christ.

Sixth F O R M.

O God, who favourably beholdest the whole Creation, incline thine Ear to these our Supplications, which we make before Thee for this thy Servant; look graciously upon him in his present Distress; visit him O Lord, with thy Salvation, and heal his Sickness, through Christ Jesus.

Seventh F O R M.

O God, who hast given to Mankind many and excellent Gifts, in order to their Eternal Welfare; grant unto this thy Servant, the Gifts and
Graces

Graces of thy Spirit; that he may acknowledge both the Health of his Body; and the Salvation of his Soul, to have been derived from Thee, who art the Giver of every good and perfect Gift, through Jesus Christ.

Eighth F O R M.

O God, who commandest all things both in Heaven and Earth; and who by thy mighty Power dost drive away all Sicknefs and all Diseases from our Bodies; mercifully look upon this thy Servant, that having recover'd his Health and Strength, he may glorify thy Name, through Jesus Christ.

Ninth F O R M.

O Lord and Holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God, who dost perfect thy Strength in our Weakness, and makest our Bodies Healthy and Strong; mercifully look upon this thy Servant, and removing the Cause of all his Infirmities, restore him we beseech Thee, to his former Health, through Jesus Christ.

“ If the Sick-Bed Penitent, after having testified his Desire of Penance before sufficient Witnesses, grew Speechless or Delirious, before the Priest could reach him, all was Transacted for him, as if he were capable; and he was solemnly Reconciled, without Confession, or other Apparatus, in one of the following Forms.”

First F O R M. (c)

O most merciful and gracious God, who according to the multitude of thy Mercies, dost so put away the Sins of those who truly repent, that Thou remembrest them no more, open thine Eye of Pity upon this thy Servant, who most earnestly desires Pardon and Forgiveness; Renew in him, most Loving Father, whatsoever hath been decayed by the Fraud and Malice of the Devil, or by his own Carnal Will and Frailty; *Restore him to the Unity of thy Church, by a full and perfect Remission of all his Sins*; Consider his Contrition, accept his Tears; and as he putteth his full Trust only in thy Mercy, *admit him to thy Peace, and be thou reconciled to him*, through Jesus Christ.

Second F O R M.

Most merciful and gracious God, who condest thy Pardon to no one Season of Life, but art always ready to open the Door of thy mercy to such as knock, and ask for it; Thou, who rejectest not the Approaches of Penitent Sinners to Thee, even in their last Moments; look down with an Eye of Compassion upon this thy Servant, *Confessing his Sins unto Thee*, and earnestly desiring thy Pardon and Forgiveness. Renew in him most loving Father, whatsoever he may have committed against Thee, by Thought, Word,

(c) The former of these seems fitter of the Two, for the Case of such Clinical Penitents, as had given Proofs of desiring Penance, but grew Delirious or Speechless, before the Priest's Arrival. This latter expressly mentions the Confession of his Sins, and implies it to have preceded.

Word, or Deed, through the Fraud of his Ghostly Enemy; and as he is one of those whom Thou camest to Redeem, *Re-unite him* (we beseech Thee) *to the Body of thy Church*. Consider his Contrition, accept his Tears, and as he putteth his full Trust only in thy Mercy, receive him to thy Favour, and *vouchsafe to be Reconciled* unto him. For thou canst easily wipe out the Stains which any Soul may have contracted, by its Habitation in a frail and mortal Body; Thou art True and Faithful in all thy Sayings, and hast pronounc'd Salvation to the Sinner, as soon as he shall return from the wickedness of his ways; Do thou therefore forgive and save thy Servant now before Thee, through Jesus Christ.

“ Then followed the Benediction, in some
“ one, or more of the subjoined Formularies.”

The Introduction to which here follows.

The Lord spake unto Moses, saying; Speak unto Aaron and to his Sons, saying, On this wise shall ye Bless the Children of Israel, saying unto them; The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; The Lord make his Face shine upon thee, and be Gracious unto thee; The Lord lift up his Countenance upon thee, and give thee Peace, who liveth and reigneth, World without End. Numb. 6. 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26.

First F O R M.

God the Father who Created you; Jesus Christ who suffered for you; The Holy Spirit who hath been shed upon you, heal and help you; The whole Blessed Trinity be ever with you, all the Days of your Life. *Amen.*

D d 4

Second

Second FORM.

God the Father bless you, the Son of God relieve you, the holy Spirit of God enlighten you, receive your Body and Soul into his gracious Protection; and lead you finally to Life Eternal. *Amen.*

Third FORM.

The very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole Spirit, Soul, and Body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thess. 5. 23.

Fourth FORM.

The Almighty God, who hath said, *Whoever shall confess me before Men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in Heaven*, pour upon you his Blessing, and grant you the Remission of all your Sins.

Fifth FORM.

The Lord Christ Jesus look upon you, grant you his Salvation, and give you the Graces of his Spirit, that the Enemy may not approach to hurt or to deceive you.

Sixth FORM.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who hath slain the Devil, and deliver'd us from the Wrath to come, receive you into his most mighty Protection,

tection, that you may come at last by his Blessing to his Heavenly Kingdom.

The most High God, the Almighty Lord of Life, defend you from all Danger, both in this World and in the next. The Lord lift up the Light of his Countenance upon you, and grant you Peace all the Days of your Life. The Lord sanctify you throughout, that you may be lowly, perfect, and entire, both in Body and Soul; and be preserv'd blameless in both, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord grant you an Angel of Peace to guide your Heart both in this World and the other. May he purify your Soul from all Guilt, defend you from all Evil, and from all the Accusations of your Ghostly Enemy. And when he shall come in his Majesty to Judgment, may he not reject you, but receive you, to the Recompence of his glorious Kingdom.

“ Thus far our Arch-Bishop *Ecbert*. — From
 “ whom it appears, that all *Absolutions* as yet
 “ were *precatory*. Nay, and to go much lower
 “ er than the Period whence these Collections
 “ are taken, even to the latter Part of the
 “ 11th Century, there we shall find them
 “ running in the same Form. Mr. *Petit* hath
 “ publish'd a Breviary compos'd for the Use
 “ of a certain Monastery in *Italy*; which, tho'
 “ it carries divers Marks of that Age's Super-
 “ stitions, yet hath all its Forms of Reconci-
 “ liation (which are very many) *precatory*
 “ and optative.

“ *Paschasius Quesnel* conjectures this Breviary
 “ to have been compos'd soon after the Year
 “ 1086, ”

NUMB.

N U M B. VIII.

“ **A**FTER then the sick Penitent had confessed, and Penance was enjoined him, he was *absolv'd*, and bless'd in Forms so little varying from what have been already translated, (and those Variations declining so much towards the worse) that it will not be worth while to trouble the Reader with them. Only it may be fit to note, that after Absolution, there follow'd the Unction of the Sick, and then he was admitted to communicate; since, as *Morinus* hath well observ'd, (d) *it was long before Absolution was in Point of Time distinguish'd or separated from the Participation of the Body and Blood of Christ; which in this Breviary was attended with the Formularies here subjoin'd.* ”

O Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, mercifully regard the Supplications which we make for our sick Brother here before Thee, that this holy Eucharist may be a Defence and Shield to him in Body and Soul, and may enable him to partake of thy Eternal Glory, who livest and reignest, &c.

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve your Soul and Body unto Life Eternal.

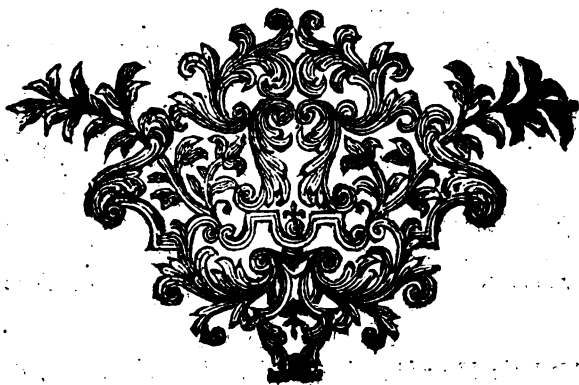
Holy Lord, Almighty Father, and Eternal God, we humbly pray, that the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, thy Son our Lord, may preserve

(d) Antiquissimis illis Temporibus Absolutio ab Eucharistia non separabatur. *Morin. de Pœnitent. lib. 10. cap. 1. § 10.*

preserve the Body and Soul of this thy Servant now receiving it, unto Life Eternal.

God the Father bless thee, Jesus Christ relieve and help thee, the holy Spirit of Grace enlighten thee, preserve thy Body, and save thy Soul; illuminate thy Heart, guide all thy Senses, and lead thee finally to a better Life, who liveth and reigneth, three Persons in one ever blessed Deity, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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